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THE MONEY-MAKERS.

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THE MONEY-MAKERS.

A Social Parable.

"It may be said that the millionaire is the romantic figure par excellence of the nineteenth century. The heroes who put to flight, by their unaided prowess, whole armies of enemies, have ceased to interest us. We give our admiration to the marvelous being who, from the retirement of his sanctum, controls the commerce of the world, and makes the clothing and food of mankind cheap, or, by preference, dear."—ENGLISH REVIEW.

NEW YORK:
D. APPLETON AND COMPANY,
1, 3, AND 5 BOND STREET.
1885.

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TO

F. E. F.,

A TESTIMONY OF AFFECTIONATE HOMAGE,

BY THE AUTHOR.

NOTE.

"THE MONEY-MAKERS" was written a year ago—or, to be exact, the story was begun in the early days of February, and ended in the latter days of March, 1884. Had the book come at once before the public, its specific purpose would have been more manifest, and its machinery more transparent. As it is written rather to embalm permanent conditions than to perpetuate controversy, the time lost has made a prefatory word essential. While the delay in publication distorts the realism of fiction into the grossness of the actual, the essence of romance into revelation, the reader who bears the date of writing in mind can not confuse the personages, or misconstrue the incidents, with those of a more recent date to which they bear a whimsical resemblance. The critic, quick to seize salient faults in execution, would in such misconception not only lose the basis and purpose of the parable, but animadvert, not unjustifiably, on the work as a satire upon men and measures, never contemplated in the author's design. While to a certain extent the purpose of the

story constrained its form and diminished the interplay of its incidents, the laws that govern fiction have been observed, and though dramatic *dénouement* has been to some degree sacrificed, the story in the main has superseded every other interest.

NEW YORK, *January*, 1885.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	THE NETTLE-DANGER	1
II.	THE JINGLING OF THE GUINEA	13
III.	THE CUP FOUND IN BENJAMIN'S SACK	28
IV.	A CHAPTER FROM CHESTERFIELD	45
V.	A GOLDEN MEAN	61
VI.	NOVUM ORGANUM	76
VII.	A WOMAN SCORNED	90
VIII.	LESSONS IN HIGH LIFE	102
IX.	CLODIUS CAPTURES THE BONA DEA	117
X.	THE GENESIS OF A MONEY-MAKER	132
XI.	PROPAGANDA FIDES	140
XII.	THE WINGS OF ICARUS	154
XIII.	MY DUCATS OR MY DAUGHTER?	167
XIV.	"LOVE TOOK UP THE HARP OF LIFE"	178
XV.	"BE BUT SWORN, MY LOVE"	191
XVI.	"DE L'AUDACE; TOUJOURS DE L'AUDACE ET ENCORE DE L'AUDACE"	204
XVII.	ABSALOM AND ACHITOPHEL!	219
XVIII.	A WINTER'S TALE	228
XIX.	APOCALYPSE!	238
XX.	ALL THINGS TO ALL MEN	249
XXI.	THE HAND OF CRŒSUS AND THE VOICE OF ANARCH.	260
XXII.	THE GUINEA'S STAMP	270
XXIII.	CRŒSUS ON THE PYRE	279
XXIV.	"THE REVOLT OF CALIBAN"	291
XXV.	A MASQUE OF HORROR	301
XXVI.	"AS THE HUSBAND IS, THE WIFE IS"	315
XXVII.	SO RUNS THE WORLD AWAY	327

"There was a time when mortals lived like brutes
In caves and unsunned hollows of the earth,
For neither house nor city flanked with towers
Had then been reared; no plowshare cut the clod
To make it yield a bounteous harvest, nor
Were the vines ranked and trimmed with pruning-knives,
But fruitless births the sterile earth did bear.
Men on each other fed with mutual slaughter,
For Law was feeble, Violence enthroned,
And to the strong the weaker fell a prey.
But soon as Time that bears and nurtures all
Wrought out another change in human life,
Whether some rapt Promethean utterance
Or strong Necessity or Nature's teaching
Through long experience their deliverance brought,
. . . . . and the earth
Unsown before was plowed with oxen; cities then
They girt with towers and sheltering houses raised,
And turned their savage life to civil ways;
And after that Law bade entomb the dead
And measure out to each his share of dust,
Nor leave unburied and exposed to sight
Ghastly reminders of their former feasts."

THE MONEY-MAKERS.

CHAPTER I.

THE NETTLE-DANGER.

AT that point of time in the month of July, and the year 1871, when the processes of the planets and the revolutions of the earth brought the Island of Manhattan directly beneath the sun's fierce eye, the Eighth Avenue between Twenty-seventh and Twenty-eighth Streets was dense with an agitated multitude. The sagacious few who had by timely coming secured shelter under the slatternly awnings, mopped the exuding water from their faces, and craned their necks to catch the first symptom of the expected outbreak. The sun, as if interested in the spectacle, hung in exact meridian, sending down scorching, blistering darts that penetrated like needles wherever they fell. From curb to curb the gray cobble-stones glimmered under the fiery atmosphere as if they had burned out and were ashen effigies of stone emitting the radiating pulsations of caloric that follow flame. Violet waves of vaporous density rose in the air, stifling and mephitic, through which the crowd panted and wrestled like figures in a transparent mirage. Still higher air-currents danced and undulated like the hot atmospheres that follow the molten metal plunged into the furnace. The scraggy trees, that offered neither vernal shade nor suggested decoration, stretched their brown and palpitating arms upward as if a breath would send their burned substance over the pavement. The sweltering leaves of the ailantus curled moist and pungent with a nauseous odor around the twisted stems of their branchlets, or hung in flabby dejection from their oozing

twigs. Everything that the season meant to be green was faded and scorched like paper burned to a crisp, which still holds outlines of the original substance. Among these wan and withered specters of foliage hovered bevies of voiceless and trailing-winged sparrows, their red gorges open to catch the breath of air that did not come. A prowling cat, disturbed in her mouse-quest in the green-grocer's at the corner, coming out cautiously, took the distended wings and general languor exhibited in the attitude of the birds as a promise of a fat breakfast; but she skurried abjectly under the ice-box at sight of their open mouths, they looked so large and fierce!

Whoever among the crowd had the courage to examine the lurid line of red brick forming the fronts of the long rows of irregular buildings, would have been curiously surprised at the grotesque effects wrought by the refluent waves of heat. The solid walls seemed to wave, to obtrude, and shrink in the pulsating breath of the escaping heat. The mortar-lines between stretched and quivered like slender cords, the brick squares forming an illuminated lattice-work through which were seen spectral faces, wan and terror-stricken. In the thick haze of the hot air, even the parched offal piled in the gutters, emitting putrescent and phosphorescent stenches, visible to the eye as to the smell, faded into fantastic cleanliness in the magic breath of the scorching light. A dog, limp and gasping, stood quite erect on his four paws underneath a motionless butcher-cart, as if comprehending that his toes presented less surface to the burning stones, and kept his body at a lower temperature! A small boy, clinging to his mother's skirts, catching sight of the protruding tongue and bloodshot eyes of the beast, pulled the maternal garment and asked in wonder:

"Is doggy turning inside out to keep cool?"

These phenomena, and much that must go unrecorded, would have struck the observant person on that 12th of July, 1871, and would have perhaps been correlated by a curious Darwin as part of the painful phasis of the social evolution that was going on. He would have been, however, a very self-contained person who could have taken these details into account that terrible morning. A thrilling movement engrossed the eyes and ears of ten thousand

men, women, and children sweltering in the torrid air, massed on the avenue between Twenty-seventh and Twenty-eighth Streets. Under the grocer's awning, and standing quite at the edge of the curb, there were two young men in this multitude who scrutinized the movements of the mass with a self-possession singularly in contrast with the agitation of the crowd about them. The taller by an inch or two, whose carefully gloved hand kept hold of the iron post, would have fixed attention anywhere as a personage. His face was a florid, ruddy brown, his eyes a penetrating hazel that looked at you full and unshrinking, beautifully instinct of life and feeling. The second figure, a trifle less pronounced, was almost equally attractive. His earnest gray eyes were clear and frank; his complexion colorless; his mouth well cut and decisive in its lines. He was perhaps a year or two younger than his companion, but his boyish straw hat gave him a still more youthful appearance in contrast with the other whose sweltering temples bulged out beneath that evidence of the omnipotence of convention—a tall silk hat!

"I say, Carew," the elder said in a humorously serious tone, "if good Americans go to Paris when they die, the wicked must come to New York. Hell is an iceberg compared to this!"

Carew laughed, and mopped his forehead, over which brown curls fell in moist profusion as he held his hat in his hand.

"That would make a popular leading article if you would set it forth with your usual vivid touch. Suppose you propound it to the readers of the 'Atlas' to-morrow?"

"By Heaven!" suddenly exclaimed the other, "there are the militia, and they look as if they mean business. There will be trouble after all—look!"

The police had driven back the crowd, and the glistening bayonets of a regiment could be seen spanning the avenue, the crowd yielding sullenly, and jeering before the leveled muskets.

"My infatuated young friend, I'm going to leave you, if," continued the same speaker, "as I am reluctant to believe, you mean what you say, to remain and report it all. This scene lacks two things that, as I grow older, I think of more—repose and security. What would my friends think should my name appear

among the killed to-morrow morning? I don't mind taking risks when the case demands it, but death, which, to a well-regulated mind, has no distinct horror, would be appalling, I am free to say, when met ignobly, as it would be in a preposterous shindy like this. I'm off—come on!"

"But, Hilliard, I'm obliged to be here; I'm assigned to do the work. If I lose sight of a single movement that the other papers print, I would be dismissed."

"Here, fall back behind this wagon, a trifle out of range, as it were; there, now we are secure for the moment. Your conscience is creditable to you, very, but the 'Atlas' doesn't intend, in ordering you here, that you should lose your life—first, because your taking off would be apt to entail some outlay on its exchequer; second, because that lurid mosaic which is to adorn its broad columns to-morrow would lack your fine Florentine touches. Now let me tell you what to do. You've seen the *dramatis personæ*, and you have the *scenarium* well in mind. Begin your report in this way:

"'Through sloping banks of such green as the eyes of Erin's sons alone reflect, ran a shallow stream of limpid water eastward to the sea. On the left bank facing the sun twenty thousand men were hustling themselves into harness—aligned under the Bourbon lilies, the blood-red Cross of St. George, and the green flag of Ireland. On a hillock commanding the field, an old man, with clear eye and trembling hand, sat upon a sumptuously accoutred steed. Surrounded by a splendid *cortége* of captains, he was studying through his glass a group on the right bank a gun-shot to the northeastward. The center of that mass was a gaunt figure bestriding a shining white horse, not quite so showily caparisoned as that on the left bank. He, too, was the center of a multitude whose ranks were here and there marked by standards as varied but not so gaudy as the white, red, and green, hanging limply on their poles on the southern side. These were the royal St. George; the orange of the house of Holland; the black and yellow of Brunswick, and the green of Erin.

"'The sun was hardly above the distant Wicklow Hills, but the tranquil valley was alive with arming soldiery. As the forces on

the right bank began to take shape, a cannon-ball fell at the feet of the man on the white horse.

"'"Sire, your father-in-law sends you a morning greeting," says a stalwart soldier next to him of the white horse.

"'"Ah, Ginkel, the poor man will send a more pacific messenger before the day is done—we shall beat them!"

"'On the other side, at the same moment, a soldier in the uniform of a French marshal rides up to the elderly person and salutes respectfully, saying:

"'"Sire, the rascals mean to fight; we shall have them in the hollow of our hand. I can congratulate your Majesty on such a chance; to-night Monsieur d'Orange will ask nothing better than to go back with a whole neck to his tulips at La Haye."

"'"Very good, Lauzun—the rebels are moving. Can't you give Orange a compliment from your battery yonder?"

"'The general sends an aide to the battery. As the group on the opposite side spring to the saddle, the white horse is left conspicuous. The fire of the artillerists scatters them, and presently he on the south bank ejaculates piously:

"'"Now, praise be to God, the villain's down!"

"'It was true—the cavalier under the orange flag reels from his saddle, is caught and helped behind the knoll. A great shout rolls from the southern bank. Then the soldiery of Orange appear, on the head of each a sprig of green; they march down the hill-side; enter the roseate water—rush with a shout toward the low banks, and in twenty minutes they have planted themselves where their enemies had been. The green flags disappear, and all that is seen on the dewy hillocks are the golden lilies of France. In an hour they, too, have gone from the field. By noon James Stuart is in flight, and William of Orange has chased his father-in-law from Ireland as he had the year before chased him from England.'"

"But," asks Hilliard's companion, keeping his eye attentively on another body of militia just then debouching into the wide avenue, "what has Boyne water to do with this *mêlée*?"

"Bring a little imagination to bear on this point, my son: that incident is the historical perspective of this. Having ingenuously fastened the reader's attention upon the event of two hundred

years ago, from which this idiotic fantasia takes its rise, you can denounce both sides as imbeciles, and denunciation is the forte of the press of to-day. You can point out adroitly how the Orangemen are celebrating a victory of the Dutch Ginkel and his sturdy troopers over the French king and his Bourbon cavaliers—for, as a matter of fact, few Irish and no English came into action that day of the Boyne."

At that instant there was a sudden movement of the crowd. As the young men talked, the avenue had filled with a mass driven from the cross-street above by the militia, which had formed in platoons across the roadway. The space vacated by the crowd was immediately filled by ranks of men with orange cockades on their hats and orange scarfs across their breasts. The sight of these, and a dozen marshals on horseback beplumed and beriboned, elicited a howl of derisive scorn from the mob.

"There, Carew, the fun will soon begin. I don't propose to give my blood to dye the orange. When soldiery are called in, all who are not in uniform are the mob. I am off!"

As he spoke, a cordon of police swept down from the square where the Orangemen were massed, clearing the crowd with clubs."

"You see, it is insane—come!"

The two were hustled into the dense mass and forced onward at a run. At the next cross-street Hilliard and Carew pushed out of the crowded thoroughfare. The mob kept in the avenue, and the two found themselves in an excellent point of vantage—to see the flying multitude.

"It's going to be a farce instead of a tragedy," said Hilliard, standing on the lower step of a house midway between the two avenues. "Take my word for it, the historical touch, neatly elaborated, will give your report just the tone the 'Atlas' likes."

"It's not over yet," exclaimed Carew, excitedly. "Do you hear that? Good God! see there!"

As he spoke, a single sharp volley roared out above the clamor of the crowd. To escape the fire of the soldiery, some of the throng turned into the street in which the young men had taken refuge. A confused outcry of command and exhortation could be heard around the corner in the avenue. One platoon of the mili-

tia coming abreast of the street made a half-wheel, halted, leveled their muskets, and sent a volley among the straggling groups flying toward Hilliard and Carew. The balls hurtled against the stone balustrades, sent the leaves in a shower from the trees, and whistled viciously through the almost empty street. The people in flight had for the most part darted into the area-ways. A few, however, were in the center and on the sidewalks. Three of these fell just before our friends. At the instant the volley was fired a *coupé*, driven at frantic speed, turned in from the Seventh Avenue, the driver apparently unaware of the danger he was running. He stopped his horses when he saw the crowd, but, before he could get their heads to the eastward, he threw up his arms convulsively and fell limply from the seat to the pavement. Hilliard, marking that the soldiery had wheeled back in the avenue ran forward, seized the animals' heads, grasped the lines, mounted the box and drove the vehicle into Seventh Avenue, and, when the sounds of the mob were far in the rear, halted. As he leaped down, a man's head was thrust out of the window. Hilliard, calling a youth standing idly at the curb, as if awaiting a job, bade him hold the horses' heads, and leaped down to let his *protégés* know the danger was over. To his great surprise, an elderly person got out and hastened to close the door, as if to keep Hilliard from catching sight of the other occupant.

"That was a pretty close shave, sir," he said, scrutinizing the other closely. "What has become of my man? He wasn't seriously hurt, was he?"

Hilliard, stupefied by the man's composure under the circumstances, answered dryly that the driver must have been hit seriously.

"Well, I'll see that he is attended to. May I ask your name, sir? You have done me a gallant service. I—I—must see that you—"

"I beg your pardon, sir; my name is of no interest to you—the service you speak of any one would have done. Good-day!" and, bowing haughtily, Hilliard set out for Twenty-seventh Street. As he passed the *coupé*, however, he caught a glimpse of a lady's face. She was looking at him intently, and he remarked that she was well-favored. Continuing at a rapid pace, he reached Twenty-

seventh Street. He could see the militia drawn up at the lower end of the street and facing southward. There was now no sign of disturbance. The street had been cleared of the wounded. Reaching the house upon whose steps he had taken refuge, he saw Carew in the basement, and entered. He found that the driver had been carried in and cared for. The ball had struck him in the left shoulder, inflicting but a slight wound. The man was lying on a table, and a surgeon was stanching the blood. As the two friends were about to go, the physician, turning to Carew, said:

"As there will probably be an investigation into this affair, you must leave me your address. This man can collect a handsome sum in damages from the city."

Hilliard and Carew gave their cards, and took leave of the victim.

"Well, I suppose you have the laurels of the hero who snatches beauty from peril," said Carew, as the two walked out under the doorway. "Was it beauty in distress—or trembling age?"

"It was a beast!" and Hilliard's tone grew hard, and his eyes sparkled with rage. The old vulgarian—he was going to offer me money—like a common lackey!" and then he recounted the scene.

"But there was beauty in the case?"

"She wasn't bad—" Hilliard checked himself suddenly, and continued dryly: "There was no romance or the seed of a sentimental *dénoûment* in the business. But what has become of our croppies? Is the riot over?"

"It looks like it."

The young men found it no difficult matter to penetrate to the soldiery now. The colonel of the militia regiment was known to Hilliard, and, introducing Carew, they learned that the trouble was at an end. There had been no riot, nor need there have been a shot fired. The vivacity of a squad of young militiamen had brought about the firing. There had been a scuffle between two over-emphatic supporters of the orange and the green. The crowd had taken sides, and the soldiers, ordered to disperse them, had fired without command. Perhaps twenty had been killed, and a few score wounded.

Among the florid narratives that adorned the columns of the

journals the next day, it was remarked generally that the account of the scene published in the "Atlas" was the most picturesque and original. Both sides in the contest found something to soothe their *amour propre.* The humorous prologue of King James and the Prince of Orange at the Boyne reconciled the Catholics to the severely comminatory comments of the editor, who, in pointing out the unchristian rancor of a sect that, after two hundred years, gave vent to its passions on such childish provocation, was only a shade more blamable "than the disciples of a creed that transported to these peaceful shores the symbols and sentiments of a feud that no good man could approve, and no wise man seek to perpetuate."

When Hilliard and Carew reached the office in the afternoon, they found unexpected results from their day's work. Opening their letters, each found a note from the editor. Hilliard's ran:

"THE 'ATLAS,' *July* 13, 1871.

"DEAR MR. HILLIARD: Your value to this journal, which has always been warmly appreciated by the directors as well as myself, was never so signally proved as in your leader of this morning, which, as a literary performance, takes rank with the best journalistic writing of the time, and enables the 'Atlas' easily to maintain its rank as the leading newspaper of the day. Of course, this is just the sort of work we want, and, to secure it, we are willing to pay largely. I have, therefore, the pleasure of informing you that twenty dollars per week will be added to your salary from Saturday next.

"Cordially yours,

"HORATIO BLACKDAW.

"MR. ARCHIBALD HILLIARD."

Opening a second note in an unknown hand, marked with the seal of the Cunard Company, Hilliard read with mingled sensations:

"STEAMSHIP BOTHNIA, JERSEY CITY, *July* 12, 1871.

"DEAR SIR: I learn from my coachman your name and address. If my passage were not taken on this ship, I would call in person to thank you fittingly for your gallant conduct this

morning. On behalf of my daughter and myself, I beg you to accept the inclosed as the only way, for the moment, I am able to reward your heroic act.

"Very gratefully yours,

"AARON GRIMSTONE."

Amara Stone

As Hilliard unfolded the check drawn for five thousand dollars, Carew rushed in from another room, crying eagerly:

"There, look at that! Say now that we're in an age of greed and thanklessness!" He held out a letter, and Hilliard read:

"THE 'ATLAS,' CITY DEPARTMENT, *July* 13, 1871.

"MY DEAR CAREW: I am directed by the managing editor to inform you that your report of yesterday's riot eclipses those of all our rivals, and that you are henceforth to serve as a member of the editorial staff at a salary of thirty dollars per week. I need not say that I am sorry to lose you from my department; but, as the promotion is a compliment to my corps, I heartily rejoice in your well-won good fortune.

"Fraternally yours,

"MYRON MCCOSH,

"*City Editor.*"

"I congratulate you heartily," said Hilliard. "I knew—"

"But that isn't all. Look at this!" and he handed him an open note, with the Cunard seal, identical with Hilliard's, which said:

"DEAR SIR: Permit me to acknowledge your humanity in rescuing my coachman this morning, and, by accepting the inclosed check, oblige,

"Very truly yours,

"AARON GRIMSTONE."

"Now, what do you think of that?" cried Carew, flourishing a check for one thousand dollars before the eyes of the other.

"I think just what I said yesterday. The man's a brute, with a brute's fiber in every molecule of his vulgar old carcass!" and he handed the other the letter he had received.

"Whew! five thousand! Well, that is princely. Why, you're rich. You can live like a nabob, and, by George, you can marry!"

"Don't be a simpleton. Do you suppose I'm going to keep money flung at me in this way? It's perfectly proper for you," he added, as the other flushed. "You risked your life for an inferior, while it so happened that it fell to me to carry the man and his daughter out of harm's way. If he were a man of breeding, he would not take this odious way to express his recognition. I am not surprised, now that I know his name."

"Why, who is he?" asked Carew, sinking into a chair, the notes crumpled in his hands.

"He is a Western railway magnate—kings, I believe you call them now. He made his money in Valedo through all sorts of sharp practices, and controls the whole State of Appalachia. I saw his family abroad some years ago, when I was in the legation in Belgium."

"But I don't understand what's wrong in his sending you the money. I'm sure it's munificent. What would you have him do? Invite you to his house and ask you to take his daughter, and give you a paternal blessing?"

"Well, we won't talk about it," said Hilliard, coldly, seating himself by the window, and looking toward the clock on St. Paul's. "These are things that, as the French say, *ne se fait pas, ne se dit pas.* If you do not see the bearing of the affair, all the explanation I could give wouldn't help you. You keep your money—you can do so with dignity. I will send this check back, and teach the coarse-grained old egotist a lesson in manners that all his money hasn't given him."

"But 'pon my soul, Hilliard, I can't see the distinction. If it is degrading for you to accept the check, it is degrading for me. As a matter of fact, you risked your life in getting on the *coupé*, and I didn't, for the firing was over when I got to the coachman. Why shouldn't a man be generous where another has exposed his limbs to get him out of danger?"

"Don't you see, you purblind Jack! that the very reasons you give admit of no other action? Before the peril of life all men are equal. Grimstone's life was in danger; you say mine was

when I drove his horses out of range of the fire. That makes us equals—and equals can't send each other money when accidents put it in the power of one to serve the other. He might very properly reward a footman in this way—never a gentleman."

"Very good: if the ordeal of common danger makes equality, the coachman was my equal, and I am degrading myself in accepting money for putting myself on an equality with him. Isn't that the inference from your equality axiom?"

"By no means. You acted on a generous, humane impulse. You were for the moment an agent of law and order, and such agencies may decently receive reward from those who are benefited. The coachman was a victim, and you rescued him from imminent peril of being trampled under foot. Nine in ten in your case would have quit him where he fell, leaving him to the care of the paid agents of public security. A man of delicacy wouldn't put an act that rescues his bones from danger at a money value, though I'm sure Grimstone wouldn't bring five thousand dollars in the market. He is consistent, however; that's the rate paid on his railway for maiming and killing!" and Hilliard laughed immoderately at the gibe.

"I am free to say I can't understand the subtile distinctions you draw. Grimstone evidently means to be generous in my case, and I'm going to write and thank him for the money. It may be degrading, but I'm blessed if I can so construe it! Let's drop the point. That was a splendid leader of yours in the 'Atlas,' and the allusion to the scene on the Boyne made my report seem just the thing. Has the chief said anything about it?"

"Yes, I've had my wages raised," said Hilliard, carelessly, but making no offer to show the other the chief's congratulatory letter.

"By George, it was a good day's work! I wouldn't mind riots every day if they brought such luck!"

"Let us hope that the city has more fools to display red rags for the encouragement of riots—if honest men profit by it," added the other, cynically, and the young men turned to their desks—Hilliard to construct another "leader," adding to the moral of the

first; and Carew, in the exaltation of a soldier, signalized on the battle-field, taking his first intoxicating plunge into the sublimated atmosphere of editorial composition.

CHAPTER II.

THE JINGLING OF THE GUINEA.

FINDING that Grimstone had sailed, Archibald Hilliard did not inclose the check to Valedo, as he had first meditated doing. There was no hurry, and perhaps, to make the sting sharper, it would be better to wait until he could find out his foreign address. Still, the money in his possession gave him a sense of humiliating dependence that grew more and more irksome the longer he thought of the event. Hilliard had not been quite frank in the reasons he alleged to his friend Carew in his purpose of returning Grimstone's gift. He was not withheld from its acceptance wholly by the transcendental motives he had urged. The temptation to keep it was strong. He was poor, and after many vicissitudes had recently joined the corps of the "Atlas" as an experiment—a type of thousands of young men whose restlessness bring them finally to this fateful mart of brains, energies, and craft. He was conscious of an equality with those whose successes had given them precedence in the higher range of commercial activity. He had been trained in a varied school. Educated at a Western college, he had settled down to the study of law in Valedo. From law he was diverted by the election of his patron, Judge Killgore, to the governorship of Appalachia. Serving four years as his secretary, he accompanied him to Washington, when, at the end of the great man's term, Killgore was sent to the Senate. In Washington the callow country boy found with dismay that he was not schooled at all. Thrown among the sharp intellects drawn to the capital in the closing scenes of the civil war, he soon conceived a profound disgust for the commonplace career he had aspired to. As to education, he found that the four years he had passed in the

rural rubric was no education at all. Contrasting the boorish self-sufficiency of his patron with the easy manners and varied refinements of the foreigners and Eastern men, with whom his official post brought him in relation, he resolved to make himself one of this newly discovered type. He enlarged the horizon of his ambition, and set new bounds for his goal. He went resolutely and systematically to work to prepare for this ideal existence and fit himself for high office and distinguished parts.

Holding a tight rein on his impulses, which were all for pleasure and luxury, he devoted himself to a severe classical training. He mastered the three modern tongues in vogue. In time he began to shine in the exclusive drawing-rooms of the capital, where the wits of the day were to be met.

The six years of his patron's senatorial term formed him into a man of the world. It was the epoch of scandal and riot following the war, and in these putrescent congeries the young secretary kept himself free from odious alliances, or the suspicion of trafficking in the congressional mysteries, which, as the trusted confidant of Senator Killgore, he knew to be the ruling means for self-advancement in Washington.

But he adopted honesty as a policy; not that he particularly hated the forms of corruption by which he saw the Congressmen and their coteries growing rich. He had read Chesterfield and Walpole, and, deeply impressed by the subtle immorality of these teachers, he resolved that while he would make no scruple in dealing with men by the means that molded them most surely, he would not grow rich by the ignoble methods practiced among them. It was his most inebriating moment when he saw himself mentioned in the local fashion gossip as "the elegant and refined secretary of Senator Killgore." It was an equal joy when, at the White House, he could relieve the dullness of the evening for the German, French, or Italian diplomates by talking with them in their own tongue. His crowning triumph was when the Secretary of State sent for him to make out a French treaty that had puzzled the Ollendorff acquirements of the official *personnel*. For he had studied French thoroughly, and lived in a French family to acquire the maddening measures of that maddening tongue.

Nor was his *amour propre* less flattered that he was pointed out as the only young man of his opportunities in Washington that had not grown rich in the traffic of legislative secrets.

But the time came when this passive attitude was no longer a shield. The corruption he saw about him he felt must be brought to light sooner or later, and he resolved to fly from the contamination. It was while in this frame of mind that his patron laid before him a scheme whereby both were to be made rich beyond their wildest dreams. There was a proposal before Congress for an Alaska railway charter. Stock was offered both in the railway and the construction company to those who could bring influence in their favor in the House. Now, the Senator could control all the members of his party in his State delegation in the House, and, besides his own vote, could influence others in the Senate. He could not, however, negotiate personally with the managers of the scheme, and the secretary was charged with the conduct of the affair.

"Are there other Senators in the secret?" asked the young man, regarding the Senator curiously.

"All of our party—except a few who pose as reformers—are helping the bill. But, as I have more influence, I'm offered a bigger share."

"Are any of the Ultracrats working with you?"

"Yes, but we only want to let in just enough to make the bill seem a public rather than a party measure."

The young man paced the room in deep study. It was in the Senate wing of the Capitol, his patron's committee-room. The House had adjourned for the day, and the place was restful and tranquilizing.

Hilliard came to a pause in one of the deep embrasures of a richly curtained window looking out upon the green terraces of the Capitol park. His eyes wandered far off to the soft lines of Arlington, and the lovely sweep ending at the White House. The Senator, who had been lolling at ease in one of the luxuriously cushioned chairs, arose and followed the young man. Tapping him familiarly on the shoulder, he exclaimed:

"It takes your breath away, does it, Archy?"

"Yes, Senator, it frightens me, and I wish you had not trusted the secret to me. I—"

"What! you don't mean to say that you have doubts of its being all right, and the money sure?"

"I know it's not right," the young man interrupted. "As for the money—look there, Senator"—he pointed to the White House—"your heart is set on that." The Senator colored. "You have a right to aspire to it. The man that is there was put there by you. The scores of letters that come daily, telling you of the purpose of your friends to put you there, justify me in speaking of your ambition. But, Senator, the man who sells his vote to a ring will never occupy that house by an honest vote."

The Senator turned abruptly and sank back deep into the leather cushion. Archy came to the table, waiting for a response. But his patron sat quite still, his head buried in his hands. The silence grew painful. The young man passed softly to the door, but before he reached it the voice of the other arrested him.

"You are right. I had not thought of the matter in that light. You must, however, help me out of the scrape. Write a note for me and deliver it yourself. Say this—" The statesman reflected a moment:

"'Senator Killgore desires me to say that he can not, as at present informed, give any opinion on the merits of the bill, but will deal with it as he believes the public good demands when it comes before him for consideration.'

"Now hand that to General Macomber as you pass Willard's, and, if he makes any inquiry, simply tell him that I wish to hear no more on the subject."

No remark was made when the letter was delivered; but when a few weeks later the bill came before the Senate, and his patron gave it hearty support—as his friends had in the House—Archy knew that the note was written to mislead him. He instantly resigned his place, and without a question he was allowed to go. He was offered a lucrative post in Arizona by the Senator; but he laughingly declared that he had no mind to undertake evangelizing for *the party* in the West. Without employ, he lingered in Washing-

ton some weeks, when one day a Cabinet officer, who had often remarked the young man's address, questioned him as to his future. He was the omnipotent minister of the epoch, and a day or two later Hilliard's name was sent into the Senate as *chargé d'affaires* at Athens. To the great astonishment of everybody, the nomination was rejected. The minister sent for Hilliard, and said:

"Why didn't you tell me you had quarreled with Killgore? Of course, you ought to have known that no name can succeed in the Senate unless he approves."

Archy found it difficult to explain his reasons for quitting his late patron without alluding to the railway bills, and merely answered that he supposed the Senator resented his resignation.

"Well, we must do something for you—the party needs metal of your sort"; and the great man, turning to the papers before him, brought the interview to an end. A few days later, as Archy was on the point of leaving the city, a messenger from the State Department handed him an envelope containing his appointment to a consulship in the south of France. He passed three years in that post, devoting himself to study and travel, the office being a mere sinecure; an agent, in fact, managing its affairs. At the end of the third year he was turned out of this place by the appointment of a kinsman of Senator Killgore. The young diplomate was given a temporary place in the legation in Belgium, and in 1870 settled down in New York to begin life with unusual equipments. For months he waited, casting about without much prospect of striking the career for which he felt his training was best fitted to give him the rank he courted. Carew, whom he had met in Valedo, when the two were boys, at last gave him the chance.

New York was agog for the moment over the production of Offenbach's operas by a troupe of French players, among whom figured a remarkable *soubrette*. To Carew was assigned the duty of writing them up. As he could not speak the French tongue, he implored the diplomate to help him out. Hilliard asked nothing better. He had met the French beauty in Paris, and made no scruple of leaving a card. He was invited to call, and, having laid the case before the complaisant comedienne, his friend Carew was invited to breakfast with the ladies of the troupe. The result was

a sketch so enchantingly redolent of the French *esprit*, and so captivatingly descriptive of the piquante personality of the *soubrette*, that the matter became the talk of the town. A score of letters came to the editor, to acquaint him with the pleasure the article had given; and the country papers copied it far and wide. Carew was sent for by the editor and congratulated; but, when he frankly confessed that the work was from another hand, he was requested to send for the author. The result was an engagement; and when the editor asked his new recruit if forty dollars a week would satisfy him, the young man turned pale with emotion. At first he thought he had made a mistake, and that it was forty dollars a month; but he dared not ask. When, on the Saturday following, the cashier gave him an envelope with four crisp ten-dollar notes in it, he almost shouted with relief and rapture. But he was not yet at ease. Journalism is not learned in a day; even the apparently simple business of writing a "leader" is not within the capacity of the best informed or most learned. He could not sit down, as he saw his experienced associates, take up a telegram, put his information and his inspiration down on paper, sending the sheets as fast as written to the printers waiting up-stairs. At first, in the solitude of his own room, he wrote graceful essays on abstract themes, and having handed them in waited with sinking heart for their appearance in the proofs. He found that not a line, so carefully labored at home, ever reached the types. He had been a month on the "Atlas," and confided to Carew, as they lunched in Mouquin's, then a characteristic *estaminet* in a basement in Nassau Street, that he was a failure—that his copy was never used, and that the editor would not very long fancy paying such a salary to a man who didn't average a column a week. When, at last, one day the editor sent for him, he drew a long breath, and made up his mind to bear the expected humiliation with dignity.

Horatio Blackdaw was one of the phenomenal journalistic successes of the day. A few years before he had come to New York much in the condition of Hilliard himself. He had through influential political association gained a place on the "Atlas," and soon became virtual manager, though not nominally chief. Archy had never been within the sacred penetralia of the autocrat's cabinet

but once. It was not calculated to give him confidence. The fittings were of the same meager, time-worn sort we have seen in the editorial anteroom. The "Atlas," in those days, made a cult of homeliness in its *entourage*. It had begun as an echo of the plain people. It preserved the tradition by a severity in appointments as much in contrast with its later *parvenu* sumptuousness as the cell of a Philip II with the *ensemble* of the Escurial. Its editors and writers were explicitly cautioned against anything florid in style, or snobbish in sentiment. The *roturier* Pharisees were the objects of its acrid satire and homely persiflage. Though "the best" were not exactly its abhorrence, that vast, preponderating common-sense class of the country that confirm the true popular initiation in socialism and politics relished the sturdy vigor with which the "Atlas" dealt with sham and hypocrisy.

The editor, fresh in his potent ministry, worked heart and soul to maintain the journal's ancient traditions, and ruled his lieutenants with a martinet rigor, tempered by simplicity. He was himself the slave of the lamp as well as its master. He exacted no more than he gladly gave. His word was law; but, like law, it was as often injustice. A self-made man, he secretly adored the conditions and hereditaments that no genius, no efforts, can attain.

He worshiped money, and panted for the precedence it gives in a new society, where character is slow in producing its due influence. Though some time in the city, he had not mixed enough with men to wear out the garment of narrowness and provincialism that is woven of the lineal prejudices and dogmatic perversity of small societies. Wholly uneducated in the philosophical sense of the word, he took his place at the head of the "Atlas" with the *aplomb* of Gulliver and the confidence of Sir Pertinax. When the trembling Hilliard came into the dismal attic where this potentate directed the forces of the journal, he was asked very affably to be seated. The editor finished the page before him, and then, turning in his chair, said in a discursive, reasoning way, "I'm going to find a little good-natured fault with you—not because you don't do good work or enough, but because you do too much, and too good."

Archy thought he must be dreaming, and stared helplessly.

"What I mean is, that the essays you have been writing are not pitched in the key that the newspaper requires. They are perfect in their way, and will do admirably in the periodicals. I have shown them to the editor of one of the most popular in the country, and he offers to take all you can write. Now, what we want is more in the style of your admirable French interview; you must guard against the tendency to dilettanteism. It doesn't do in a daily. That you can do just such work as we want, your shorter paragraphs prove. Now, I want to-night an article on the Crédit Mobilier exposure, and I know you can do it."

He gave the young man explicit directions, and dismissed him with friendly hints for the future. Stimulated by what he regarded as the amazing indulgence of the editor, Archy sat down, and in a short time wrote a column that an hour later he was reading with feverish eagerness in the proof. He found that not a word had been erased, not a comma changed. The next day he was felicitated by all the corps. "Such brilliancy, such humor, such irony no man in the New York press could command," he was told as he sat glowing and faint with secret triumph. "The Revolt of Caliban," as the article was entitled, went the rounds of the country papers; even those opposed in politics copied it, as the *animus* was against the men in power, and represented the ruling party as a Caliban brutalized by an unholy sorcerer accepting helot service only to debase the people and enrich the "rings" infesting every public place in Washington and throughout the national civil service. The effect was instantaneous at the capital. The leader of the reform group in the Optimate party, a man of spotless purity and admired learning, wrote to the "Atlas" that the article "had smitten like a scorpion-lash on the naked backs of the Sybarite revelers; that it was plainly from the pen of a publicist who had probed the ulcers of the party, and knew both the disease and the remedy; that the diagnosis had touched but one part of the putrefying body, and the same hand should push the scalpel to even the head and heart of the party." It was not until long afterward that Archy was shown these evidences of the triumph he had achieved, for it was the policy of the "Atlas" to measure praise sparingly. But the curiosity of his fellow-journal-

lists, and gradually the talk in the clubs and literary gatherings, to which the new writer was invited, let him see enough of the effect of his work to give him confidence in himself, and master that difficult faculty which distinguishes the journalist from the distinctively literary worker. "The Revolt of Caliban" was followed by a series of vitriolic screeds based upon the intimate knowledge of men, methods, and morals Archy had learned during his four years in Washington. The echo of outside consideration gave the new writer high standing in the office. It was noticed that Blackdaw invited him three or four times a week to dine, and that in the office he was consulted on the policy of the journal in social and political matters. Profoundly prudent, and schooled in the susceptibilities of men, the recent neophyte avoided exciting jealousy, the rock on which the ardent drift and are wrecked in the calling; and, though he grew less companionable with the younger members of the force, there was no angry alienation such as follows the good fortune of ability not supported by tact and address, or the mere beneficiary of favoritism. Always a delightful companion, the less lucky writers missed his droll stories in the dingy attic, in the intervals of writing, but no one thought of ascribing his reserve to taciturnity, or a self-consciousness of his new *rôle*.

The merry feasts at Nolan's, when, at three o'clock in the morning, the paper was put to press, were never again enlivened by Archy's reminiscences of Washington and foreign life. It soon became recognized in the office that he was part of the governing hierarchy, and the other writers—some of them grown gray at the desks where Archy had been but a year—unmurmuringly conceded him the *pas*. Of course, such prowess did not pass unrewarded, where, after all, the most æsthetic toilers best appreciate praise—the exchequer. When he had been a year in the office he was allowed one hundred dollars a week, with a flattering letter from the president of the board of directors. To this was presently added a share of the stock of the "Atlas," when it was found that rival journals were ready to give the young man his own terms.

The testimony to his power which gave him the deepest sense

of his hold on the future came from his old friend the astute Cabinet minister in Washington. That adroit politician wrote him confidentially that there were three foreign missions open from which he might choose; that his name had been presented to the President for one of them by Senator Killgore (who deeply lamented the loss of such brilliant ability to the state), whom it was the President's delight to gratify; that whenever he (Hilliard) was ready, his commission as envoy to Denmark, Belgium, or Portugal would be made out; and that he was privately authorized to assure him that so soon as the incumbent at Vienna could be decently set aside, he (Hilliard) should be promoted to the vacancy.

When this characteristic *ruse* of the enemy was shown the editor of the "Atlas," he was a very happy man. That was an evidence that his journal was making itself felt; that the party Goliath himself was ready to lay down his arms to avert impalement. In a reply addressed to the Cabinet minister, so worded as to be shown to Killgore, Archy wrote declining the honor, declaring that he had a duty to perform for the state infinitely more important than any he could render abroad, and that the work he had set himself to do was only begun; that the money-changers must be driven from the temple, as well as exposed. Thus, in the summer of 1871, Archy was not only at the head of his profession in influence and consideration, he was what most men would call successful.

He was the life of the literary clubs, to the most exclusive of which he had been elected in advance of applicants whose names had been posted for years; his own chief, indeed, gained admittance only through the potent influence of his subordinate. In society, thanks to his Washington experience, he soon found all doors open—doors that few journalists in New York had ever seen, save from the outside. Singularly enough, this dangerous facility in ascending did not turn his head. He never looked the spoiled darling of that most capricious of all worlds—the literary. His manner was always that of a contained, rather dissatisfied man.

He was given to diverting the most jocose conversation with some grave abstraction that puzzled the listener. At first this was regarded as subtile raillery on the part of the favorite; but in

time the young man was accepted as a creature of whims. The truth was, he *was* dissatisfied. His most brilliant achievements in journalism palled on him. "What are they?" he was given to asking himself. "Mere ephemerides, that are seen for a moment by the public eye and then obliterated." He became timid as his career became confirmed. At best he could never command the riches which, from the first, he held to be necessary to anything like freedom. He was fond of luxury, fond of easy living—of servants, horses, the play, the opera, books, and pictures.

The best reward in journalism could never give him these. The limitations of the profession were marked in scores of noble wrecks about him. Veterans, who created the colossal power the press had then become, he could see about him, toiling in the dingy garrets the newspaper corporations in those days allotted the craftsmen of the pen. He felt with tumultuous joy the recognition given his abilities, and cherished the adulation paid him by such *sobriquets* as the "Rupert of the Pen," and the "Prince of the Third Estate." But he knew that scores of men now toiling on a mere stipend had filled the public eye as conspicuously, had been as *fêted* and adored, and in their old age had descended to the rewards they had won as striplings. As he considered this phase, and looked forward to a long career of toil, the prospect sobered him in the wildest transports of his rapture. It was at this juncture the Grimstone incident came to pass. He had encountered Grimstone in Washington when Killgore was little more than the millionaire's political agent and instrument.

He had known of the family in his student-days in Killgore's office in Valedo, and had resented Grimstone's supercilious ignoring of his presence when in Washington Archy happened to be in the Senator's room. In New York, too, he had heard much of the millionaire. The father's wealth and the daughter's beauty made the subject of conversation in many of the exclusive drawing-rooms in which Hilliard was a personage. They came to the city every winter; but, unlike most rich men, Grimstone was content to live at an hotel, and always chose the Clarendon — society people said, wickedly, because it was the rendezvous of the English nobility who passed any time in the city.

He had been on the point of meeting the daughter a dozen times, but something had always intervened. Some one had jocosely said to him that Grimstone's daughter was a strong-minded young woman, fond of literary men, and that his destiny lay in that direction. The saying had, in spite of him, lingered in his memory, and he had waited with an unconquerable assurance in his heart that he should meet Grimstone, and that he should test the merits of the daughter. Beyond this he had resolutely kept his mind from going. But to this limit it went very often at the most unexpected conjunctures.

When he reflected on the strange chance that had finally brought Grimstone to him, he was filled with bitter mortification. He had counted on the *éclat* of a drawing-room, where he should have been pointed out first as the generally admired "Rupert of the Pen." On such conditions he felt sure that he could have impressed even Grimstone, who was best known for his utter indifference to any form of social distinction save money. But, to meet him as his beneficiary!—Archy grew hot with wounded pride, and he felt like cursing honest Carew, who had wheedled him into that luckless adventure. Poor Carew saw very little of his ancient friend after Archy became the lion of the office. His duties were of an humbler order. He was a reporter—the brilliant Archy was an editor—and the distinction is as clearly defined in the profession as that between the soldier and the officer in the army.

Even after his translation to the editorial *cénacle*, Carew saw but little of his friend. Their lines diverged socially—or rather Carew, socially, had no lines. Beyond a few friends among his associates he had no acquaintances in town, except a literary lady who gave monthly *soirées*. To this symposium, which the artless lad believed the height of social distinction, he had in the old days once taken Hilliard. Madame Leandre was a woman of impulsive cordiality. She was fond of young men in "the guild," as she used to call it, and, when Archy had talked a half-hour in the little circle where she was enthroned, she rapturously prophesied that he would some day be a power. Carew tried to get him to go again, but Archy declined. When at length, pressed by his importunate friend to tell why he never

accepted Madame Leandre's hospitable bidding, he shocked the simple-minded worshiper by saying that madame was an "old cat," and the tone of her drawing-room "vulgar and middle-bred." Carew never discovered exactly what "middle-bred" meant, but vulgar, he protested, the kindly circle never was. So, in a measure, the friendliness between the young men became a mere acquaintanceship, Carew understanding perfectly that the brilliant Rupert was of another mold than his own. Archy patronized him in a cheery, taking sort of a way that offered no pretext for resentment, and when in the office manifested keen interest in his whilom friend's welfare. Now, however, he felt the young man's existence an annoyance. He had brought him into this hateful dilemma. His self-sufficiency, too, had betrayed him into disclosing Grimstone's insulting proffer of money. It was even through his bungling kindness that Grimstone had found out the name and address. Had this last been lacking, with what freezing *hauteur* he could some time in the future encounter the disdainful old money-bags! While in this frame of mind one day he was accosted by a club acquaintance, who came to him to learn the meaning of some rumors in Wall Street about the railway-wrecker, Dorr, being compelled to give up the Ontario Railway—a great corporation that had been before the country as a *bouffe* investment for a year or two. Archy said he knew nothing of the matter; at which his companion looked incredulous.

"You newspaper-men know all that is going on, and what surprises me is that you don't make use of your knowledge. I could gain a million in short order with such chances."

Archy lost his listlessness; he was all attention. He asked the other to explain.

"Simple enough. It is rumored that some change is impending in the management of Ontario. The English stockholders have sent an agent to oust the *bouffe* managers, Risk and Fould. If any man can find that out positively twelve hours in advance, and has a few thousands to put upon a margin, he can clear from one hundred thousand to twice that sum."

Archy's heart began to thump against his ribs. He did know

the very thing alluded to. His friend General Winkles had come from London that very week, and had confided the fact that he was to seize the Ontario the next day by a *coup de main*. The words "a few thousand dollars, two hundred thousand dollars," began to rise in starry pinnacles, sparkling and golden, in his brain. He quitted his acquaintance abruptly and hurried to his room. Each step seemed measured in rhythmical unison to "thousands, thousands," and then the refrain, "two hundred thousand!" He might use the five-thousand-dollar check! Why not? It would be but a day, and at the worst he could raise the sum on his "Atlas" stock if he lost!

But the money was Grimstone's, the gain would be Grimstone's, and he should owe him his good fortune? Once gained, however, how much freer he should be! With such a sum he could easily become rich—rich as the insufferable flunkeys who presumed to tolerate him half curiously, half admiringly, with something of the impertinent adoration the golden youth lavish upon the ballet or the prima donna!—if to his intellectual conquest he could add the solidity of money in hand, money not subject to the caprice of other people's whims, money that by lying in the dark would be his slave, his benefactor, his magnet potent in every eye! An hour later he had invested the five-thousand-dollar check, and another thousand dollars he had saved. It was a night of fever and anguish. No sooner was the money in the hands of the broker, than he repented; but he could not withdraw it. He quit the office almost as soon as he reached it. There was no work possible to him that night. Work!—how he hated the word! He stood by his ragged desk and ran his eye over the dozen night-editors, writing, erasing, clipping, reading manuscript, preparing telegraph copy on oiled tissue-paper, inevitable destruction to the eye in a given time—the thought of being one of these maddened him. He was not born for it; he must write at ease. It must be a diversion, not a toil. He hurried away. He set out to go up-town—home. In spite of himself, he plunged into the narrow, lane-like thoroughfares leading to Wall Street, and, as the bell on Trinity rang out nine, he found himself before the darkened window where his treasure lay.

The thirst for gold, never wholly dormant in him, from that moment became a mastering passion. He walked down to the river, and, closing his eyes, saw pyramids of golden coin overtopping the houses. He reached to the water, and saw platings of gold covering the creeping waves. He made a circuit afar to the Battery: the waters that rolled in crested folds under the moon and stars were one vast plain of gold—all his. He reached home, jaded, feverish, insane, at midnight. He slept fitfully, and in his dreams he penetrated the hills near Valedo, and found the heart of the earth serried strata of molten gold. He seized the jutting bowlders, caressed them, kissed them, fondled them. He laid his head upon the veined pavement of yellow gold, and *dreamed* that he dreamed. Then hunger came, and he looked about for food; he laughed over handfuls of the god-like metal, for he could satisfy that hunger! As he wandered on, the gold grew brighter, but the way he came was lost. As he was fainting with the shock, he woke. It was broad day. For a moment the density of the yellow sunbeams made his familiar surroundings a phantasm, and he shivered as it flashed upon him that he was waking, but in the vaults of gold! It was noon: he was still in bed, reading the morning papers, when a messenger from the broker announced the *coup* in Ontario, and the stock gone up fifty points, and still rising! An hour later he was in Wall Street, and his six thousand dollars transformed into one hundred and sixty thousand dollars!

At that point, against the advice of his broker, he drew out. So, after all, Grimstone had made his fortune. That day the check deposited as collateral for the five-thousand-dollar loan was returned to Archy, and at once remitted to Grimstone's address in Valedo.

CHAPTER III.

THE CUP FOUND IN BENJAMIN'S SACK.

GRIMSTONE'S honorarium wrought no such moral perturbation in Alfred Carew as we have seen in Hilliard's struggle with conscience and final surrender. Before the check had been two hours in his hands Fred sent five hundred dollars to his mother in Valedo. It was to be considered a fund for schooling Jack, his brother, unless there were more pressing needs. The death of his father, and the business of bread-getting, had cut off Fred's keen desire for a university training, and he made a vow to himself that, before he did anything looking to his own future in life, he would secure a university career for his brother. The thousand dollars would go far toward that. His own pay now enabled him to put aside a sum each week ample for his own support, and for help to the home when needed. Though five years in New York, he had not yet fallen into the improvidence of his profession. His means, though small and for years precarious, had fed, clothed, and housed him, not luxuriously, or in Hilliard's eyes even decently, but Fred had found his poverty no hardship.

Reporting gave him plenty of open air; often the chance to meet agreeable, even remarkable, people. Though the art of interviewing was not then known by that name, the practice was followed. In this part of his calling Fred had been brought into relations with most of the notable personages of the war era; and while the discipline showed him his deficiencies in mental training, the experience taught him that universities alone do not make men of capacity or available acquirements. He loved journalism, and he was filled with the resolution to fit himself for its highest expression. He wrote the repulsive routine of the police-courts with as much conscientious fervor as he brought into the most æsthetic topic assigned him. His first promotion had come through a humorously pathetic sketch of a little victim of a tragedy in the slums. He had until then worked precariously, handing in "copy" to such journals as would take it—saliencies of city life that struck his quick eye in his walks about the me-

tropolis. The sketch referred to elicited a shower of approving letters to the journal, and the city editor was directed to give the writer a permanent place. He was paid fifteen dollars a week as a recognition of the excellence of his work, and he was a proud and happy fellow indeed in such a haven, and with such ample means! His letters to Valedo were dithyrambs of his new delight. They must have given his unimaginative mother the vaguest sort of a notion of his surroundings, for it was his fancy that colored the Gradgrind details. For in these letters the honest lad gave such a wonderful picture of the editorial interior, that Mrs. Carew must have believed him in an Arabian palace, so transformed was the dingy "Atlas" garret, with its rat-eaten floors, its brown plank ceilings, its rickety and defaced desks, its leather-patched chairs, its grimy windows, less for illumination than air, where the gas always burned when the editors were at work, and where no man came unless forced, so formidable were the flights of tortuous and broken stairs leading to it. But to our happy novice it was a section of Aladdin's palace, ready at any moment for Balroubdour! To him every inch of its dingy space was sacred. Consecrated by a half-century of the work of men who had molded public thought, he mentally kissed its sacred portals every time he entered, and wondered when his less impressionable comrades broke into desecrating hilarity, or the city chief relieved his impatience by an outbreak of profanity. And when, at five o'clock each afternoon, Fred sitting hot and happy under the flaring gas-jets composing his local Iliads, the great editor passed majestically through the room, distraught and oblivious, the young worshiper mentally prostrated himself, as the slaves, to the supernal wizard of the lamp. To him there was no dinginess, narrowness, low ceiling, swarming cockroaches [so big that, in a moment's relaxation, the night-editors labeled and trained them], nor murkiness in the twilight that illumined this Mansard of the gods!

He was only twenty. The world was all truth, and time was all May-day to him, as it is all sham and purple and fine linen to youth of another sort. Ah! blissful twenty, when the visible horizon of the guileless heart is the happy limit of young desire;

when the future is a dream, and the present a moonlit path over curling waves; when there is no "dare not" to wait upon "I would"; when the waters of the river of life flow limpid and untroubled; when the conscience is not yet coward before the specter of its own sin; when the heart is light as the foam of the ocean, and pure as the deeps that roll below its waves.

The city corps of the "Atlas" was made up for the most part of young men of Fred's own age. Kept constantly at work, they had little time for dissipation, or the excesses that impair less confining trades. If the antechamber of journalism, as Hilliard would have called the city work, was thus idealized into a sort of Pantheon by the enthusiastic devotee, words fail to paint his awe, his reverence, his exaltation, when the moment of his translation beyond the glass partition came, and he was given a seat among the sanctified souvenirs of the editorial room. Such editorial quarters are no longer known in New York—indeed, they are unknown even in the remotest cities of the Union. Now, though the apartments of the press are nearest the sky, the rooms are lighted, airy, and commodious. The "Atlas" itself is like Tennyson's eagle, and has the stellar bodies alone to reverence its wonderful advance in "sweetness and light."

In Carew's day a dozen writers, from the patriarch of the book reviews to the dramatic Bayard, sat in the same room. The editors who toiled in the daytime were replaced by another squad, who wrought from seven in the evening until three in the morning. Common proprietorship in the desks gave rise to a great deal of good-natured friction; but they were philosophic and kindly souls, and the "Atlas" menagerie, as its rivals were fond of calling these workers, lived in an amity tempered by fine sarcasm and alert raillery. Fred's desk by day was the property of a veteran who had witnessed the birth of nearly every journalistic bantling in the city. He was more of a pensioner than workman in those days, and his presence in the gathering was regarded as fatal to that fine flower of composition which the "Atlas" exacted from its young lions. When the office-boy, "Tony," led Fred majestically to the decrepit piece of furniture upon which, as one of his associates sarcastically reminded him, he was to

"trim the lamps of the Muses," even the devotee was forced to admit that the want of a leg, and the yawning chasm where the drawer had been in some remote past, was an inconvenience, if not a mitigation of the awe-provoking. It was not until he had sat there for many months, and ruined his only summer suit, that he ventured to suggest some needed cobbling. He proposed it to the boy, inwardly quaking lest he had invited penalties of a dire sort by such presumption. Tony's answer was reassuring. If he wanted a better desk, he might buy one; the "Atlas" had no objection. So Fred had a new desk in the dismalest corner of the room, and thereafter trimmed his lamps in the effulgence of the serene inward light, which glows brightest at twenty, and the flame is a radiance to the sense rather than a light to the feet.

There was at first a shade of jealousy among the younger members of the corps when Fred passed into the editorial group. It was known that he had been the means of introducing Hilliard on the "Atlas," and it was taken for granted that the favorite had made use of his influence to push his friend. Archy, however, rarely noticed Fred in the office now, and never asked him to join him outside, when the lunch-hour came, or on the Saturday holidays, as in the old time. He fell into a habit of satirizing Fred's boyish enthusiasms, and was the first to point out the lad's impulsive flamboyancies in style and statement, as if to mark his distinct superiority in the editorial hierarchy.

The office made its own comment, and, though everybody admitted "Rupert's" brilliancy, there was one sentiment—he was worldly and ingrate. As a matter of fact, the idea of close intimacy between the young men had very markedly favored Fred. Blackdaw was but a year or two the elder of Hilliard. His circle in New York was limited to politicians, and that class by itself that makes much of journalists and writers. So soon as he discovered that his brilliant subordinate was the lion of the most fastidious social *salons*, his admiration for Archy's literary address changed to reverence for his social potentialities. Fred, as the supposed intimate, of course, came in for some of the editor's consideration, and for a time his duties were very fascinating by

an indulgence and confidential intimacy that spurred him to days and nights of conscientiously gratuitous labor, which confirmed him in his place as an indispensable man, even after the ægis of the favorite no longer covered him. One day, while he sat writing, a boy announced a visitor, and Fred, looking up, saw a stranger standing—bending humbly, almost abjectly.

"You don't remember me, Mr. Carew. I'm the man you picked up in the street the day of the Orange riots. Gleason—Mr. Grimstone's coachman."

"Oh, yes, I am glad to see you. Have you got over all effects of the shot?"

"That's just it, sir; I've lost the use of my right hand for driving. I tried it once after I got well; but when the horses pulled hard I couldn't manage them, and I lost my place."

"What! Grimstone discharged you?"

"Oh, no, sir; I had to give up with him when I was hurt. He gave me a recommendation to one of his friends, and, as I say, I lost that place. I'm quite low now, sir. I've earned nothing steady for nine months, and odd jobs are poor pay. I've come to ask you, sir, if you can do anything to get me something to do where my fingers won't interfere—perhaps in the custom-house, or on the police-force. If you knew how miserable my wife and children was, you'd not think it bold of me to trouble you." Here the man quite broke down.

Fred placed a chair for him, and asked, "Do you mean that you are in actual want?"

"We've had nothing in the house but oatmeal for months, and not enough of that for growing boys and girls."

Fred gave the man all the money he had in his purse, took his address, and urged him to keep up a good heart. Fred could do no more work that day. The inhumanity of Grimstone, and the misery of his cast-off workman, rose before him like a sort of mute reproach. What right had he to be prosperous, and without care, when this unfortunate father found himself crippled and penniless? The money Grimstone had given him and Hilliard would make Gleason comfortable. He cast the problem over in his mind, reflecting on the best way of extricating the victim from

his plight. He made inquiries as to the possibility of getting the man a post in the custom-house. When he broached the matter to the political editor, that veteran showed him at once the futility of attempting to obtain anything in that direction.

"Blackdaw," he said, "is flooded with such applications. His secretary, on an average, answers forty or more a day. Now office is given only to people who can control political influence, ward-workers, rich men who can contribute to election-funds. The 'Atlas,' of course, has influence, but the editor is cautious about entangling himself with men that he may have to oppose. Unless you can get a strong recommendation from Blackdaw—which is virtually a command—you have no chance for your man. The custom-house, and all the Federal service, are already overflowing with men who draw salaries and do nothing. The chiefs of these wouldn't object to adding others; but to do it they must have such backing as will guarantee them against exposure. Try Blackdaw, if you like, but you won't succeed."

When Fred laid the case before Blackdaw, it was exactly as the veteran had warned him. The editor heard the young man with polite impatience, never remitting his work for a moment, though when Fred entered he found him walking up and down the room, laughing and chatting with Hilliard. For answer he pointed the philanthropist to a heap of letters on his desk:

"These are all of the same nature—men come to sudden and pitiful misfortune. I can do nothing for them. The 'Atlas' can not be turned into a help-bureau."

Fred retired abashed. He determined, however, to try the collector. With his name written on his card, and the "Atlas" on one corner to compel consideration, he went down to the custom-house and asked for Felix Poacher. He was immediately given precedence of a score of anxious people waiting wearily in the uncomfortable antechamber. The collector was a stout, red-faced Hercules, reputed to be the chief pillar of the ruling power in Washington. He was surrounded by a group of flashily dressed men, from whose bosoms glittered diamonds of various degrees of size and brilliancy.

The room was thick with smoke, and a half-dozen empty

champagne and brandy bottles stood on the sideboard, from which a waiter in a white apron was administering these beverages. Fred was confused by this spectacle, and fancied he had been shown into the wrong room. He was relieved, however, of his doubt; but his embarrassment was increased when the stout, red-faced man, holding his glass on his knee, said:

"Well, Mr. Carew, what can we do for the 'Atlas' to-day?"

Fred said he wanted just a moment's speech with the collector, and, declining the glass and cigar that the waiter was directed to give him, he laid his request before the official in a remote corner of the room, or rather he told half his story, for, so soon as the import was plain, the collector interrupted him: "Out of the question, my son. Bless your heart, we have thousands on the lists now, all spoken for by the best workers in the party! Why, the whole State has to be provided for here; and how could we ask men to work for the party if we did not give them what they ask? Then, when you think of it, we're under no compliment to the 'Atlas.' What has it been doing all these years? Scandalizing, sir—yes, you may tell Horatio Blackdaw that I say it—knifing the benefactors of the party, and hurting us—yes, sir, hurting the nation—by giving the Ultrocrats arms to fight the nation's liberators—the great Optimate party!"

"But, sir—" Fred's cheeks were tingling as the clinking of the glasses, under cover of which the first part of the speaker's apostrophe had passed unheard, ceased, and the whole party broke into lusty applause.

"That's it, sir. No favor to the traitor that would destroy the great party! More power to ye!"

Fred retreated, confused and bewildered. He gave up the attempt to procure a place in the Government service for his *protégé*. But he did not give up his efforts. He wrote home to his brother Jack to look about, and, at the end of a fortnight, that faithful agent replied that Gleason could get a place as tally-man in an iron-foundry at twenty dollars per month. Fred drew the remaining five hundred dollars of Grimstone's gift, and, after paying the transportation to Valedo, there was enough to furnish a modest home for the family. So that, by different channels,

and by suggestively contradictory impulses, Grimstone's money was doing its work in the world. It had given the brilliant Hilliard the entering-wedge into the society and life he loved, and it had given Fred Carew the chance to do a good deed. It was destined to do much more in the fortunes of both before their destinies were rounded to their ultimate development.

About this time an event happened which changed Fred's fortunes, and taught him how precarious are the rewards of journalism. A condition of anarchy had grown up in the Appalachia coal-region. At the beginning of winter the operators had closed the mines and suspended work until spring. This was done on the plea of over-production and lack of market. In many places the starving miners had formed leagues, and, it was charged, for the purpose of pillage. Fred was detailed to go to the scene of the outbreak and report impartially. He spent weeks in the anthracite regions; informed himself exactly of the productive limits of the mines at full time; then, possessing himself of the published statistics of the markets, found that coal was dearer at that moment than it had ever been known to be; that, in spite of a heavy duty, the New England States were compelled to get their coal from Canada, and that in the West there was almost a coal-famine; that, in spite of the canals and abundant and cheap railway transportation, small towns on the lines of transportation in Illinois and Iowa were reduced to burning corn on the cob for fuel!

Mystified by such a showing, he plied diligently among the operators, but got no enlightenment. They protested that they could not pay for getting the coal out because the market was glutted. The matter was carried to the State Legislature, and militia was sent into the disturbed districts, pending the inquiry. The operators charged that the attitude of the miners was mere reckless coercion; that they earned good wages nine months in the year, and that if provident they need suffer no hardship during the temporary suspension of work. They alleged that the outbreaks were bred by restless agitators and self-seeking demagogues who were paid by political leaders to disturb public peace in order that the Optimate party, then in power, might be made

odious. Journalists from all over the country were present watching the affair. For those who would accept them, quarters were provided in the residence of an opulent railway president, and their days and nights were passed in riotous debauchery. Fred refused this ominous hospitality, and alluded to it in his correspondence as indecent and degrading. He was thereafter afforded scant courtesy in the committee-rooms, and began to be avoided by his fellow-journalists. He did not let that disturb him at all. His faculties were wholly absorbed in getting at the truth of the problem involved in the contest, and his reports were read with profound interest. So soon as the workmen found that they could trust him as a friend, he had no difficulty in penetrating the plot. It was ascertained that certain railway speculators wanted to ruin the stock of a stubborn rival which had monopolized the coal and carrying traffic. In order to do this, the operators had been paid to suspend work. The legislators were asked to grant a comprehensive system of charters which would henceforth put all the coal products of Appalachia and Transylvania into the hands of a syndicate operating from New York and Pennadelphia.

In the struggle the welfare of the workmen was a matter of no importance. But the legislators were slower or less easily convinced than the syndicate had contemplated. Hence it was necessary to spur them on. Pretended leaders of the miners were hired in the principal places of discontent to goad the men on to overt violence, and then the Legislature must act. Adroit demagogues were found in abundance; outbreaks came to pass at several points. The committee in charge of the matter, with all these facts in hand, made a report justifying the operators, and the law passed. Fred narrated the scheme step by step; he gave day, date, and name; he even produced vouchers for the sums paid the incendiary leaders. In spite of all, the bill was passed. But he was taught how difficult as well as dangerous it is to tell the truth. One of the most influential leaders of the workingmen, trusted implicitly by them, came to the young man's room the night that the bill was passed, and, laying an envelope on the table before him, said, in a confidential tone:

"There, Mr. Carew, is the sum that it was agreed should be

yours for your work. We've failed, but we'll have more money next time, and we'll beat! We are going to reorganize open war in the mountains, and, if you stand by us as you have done, we'll see that you lose nothing."

"Why, Birch, what are you talking about? Reward me? Whoever gave you such a notion? No, sir, I have written the truth about the miners. If you, as head of the league, have money, you should employ it to relieve the miserable fellows in the mountains. Furthermore"—Fred arose as he spoke, and came within arm's reach of the man—"if I supposed you really quite understood the meaning of this business, I would thrash you until you went on your knees in contrition. Don't you know, man, that such an act as this justifies all that the syndicate charges on your league: that you have plenty of money; that your revolt is purely political and black-mailing; and that your men are simply intractable because they are overpaid and idle?"

Birch had retreated from the indignant moralist, and held the door partly open as he said, in a loud voice:

"There's the money that was agreed on. If you're not satisfied with it, you must ask the council for more."

With an execration of ungovernable wrath Fred sprang at the man; but, as he reached the door, several people were between him and Birch. One was a journalist that Fred knew to be in the employ of the syndicate, a man that he had cordially befriended in New York. Another was the chief lobbyist, and another a member of the committee Fred had denounced as receiving a bribe.

"What's the row, Carew?" asked his rival. "Friends fallen out, eh?"

"Bring that scoundrel in here! I've a score to settle with him," and Fred pointed to Birch, who stood protected by the lobbyist.

"It isn't my fault," he shouted above Fred's angry voice, "that the sum isn't as much as you bargained for!"

"You infernal ruffian, I'll throttle the truth from you!" roared Fred, as with a mighty rush he pushed the human rampart aside, and clutched the leaguer by the throat. The man was twofold

his build, and, compared to him, as an ox to a deer. But the onslaught was so sudden that Fred had pushed him against the window-sill, the slender frame gave way, and the two men were almost out, when the stupefied group collected their wits and their strength, haled them into the hall-way by main force, and separated them.

"Well, you are a muscular Christian, sure enough!" said the rival journalist, as Fred, panting and choking, glared at the burly leader of the working-men. "You strike right out, just as you write. But explain; what does it all mean? I thought you were the apostle-in-chief of Birch's proselytes?"

Fred looked from one to the other of the group. The true meaning of the incident had not yet flashed on him. Addressing himself to the journalist, he said:

"Sanders, I call you to witness. This scoundrel came to me a few moments ago with a bribe—or what he says is a bribe. It is in an envelope on my table there. I want you to take it before these witnesses, and deliver it to the hotel-clerk to be at the disposal of the legislative committee."

"Ah! all right," said Sanders, laughing cynically. "Let us see how high they rate you!"

He went to the table and took up the envelope addressed in a sprawling hand to "Mr. Alfred Carew, Esq., of the 'Atlas.'" As he was about to break it open, Fred seized his hand. "No, sir, that envelope shall not be opened in my room. You must deliver it at the desk just as it is, or not at all!"

He waited a moment. Sanders fumbled it in his hand, and looked questioningly at the lobbyist. After an instant's pause he threw it back on the table, declining to be made responsible for the delivery. Fred, without a reply, walked to the bell-rope and pulled it. Suddenly the group, as if with one impulse, made for the door; but before Sanders reached it Fred was ahead of him. Placing himself against it, he turned appealingly, and held his arm out with a gesture of entreaty.

"No, Sanders—my reputation is at stake; you have known me five years; you know that I never hesitated when trouble came upon you; that I held your place when you were down with fever;

that I saved you from dismissal and disgrace. I don't ask much. I want you to be able to bear witness that this is an odious plot. That is all!"

Sanders walked to the window and looked out intently, then came back to Fred—opened the door and looked into the hall.

"Don't be alarmed—I don't want to get away; you couldn't detain me if I did," he added with a laugh. He looked down the hall, and Fred, over his shoulder, saw that there was no one there; but he remained with his back to the door when Sanders again entered the room.

"Now listen, Carew. You're very young and very green, and I am going to tell you something of value. You've seen how much good your denunciations of the syndicate have done? Their report was taken by the committee; the committee's report was adopted by the Legislature, and their law will be in force before the session ends. It's a mere question of money. The men who are running this country just now are not groping in the dark; you have found that out. I compliment you on the sagacity that discovered their tracks in the league. It may flatter you to know that it gave them a very disagreeable quarter of an hour. What you have seen of their methods ought to have taught you that they are not men to be balked by one newspaper, or a dozen. When a newspaper opposes them they find means of buying it out. Ah! you needn't assume that the 'Atlas' is none such. In less than twelve months from this the 'Atlas' will be the property of one of the members of the syndicate, and your cream-clabber johnny-cake, Blackdaw, will be the ductile medium of its new faith.

"Oh, yes, I was as deeply smitten with revolt as you, when, two years ago, I uncovered the condition of the miners; but it isn't the miners alone that bear the screws. I tell you we're come to a new doctrine of forces—money is literally king! Its possessors, and those who want to possess it, are banded together to get it, not in mere cent per cent, like the Jews, but in streams—in cart-loads. Can't you see it yourself, man? You said you saved me from disgrace, because I missed a bit of news, and if I had gone to the office I would have been dismissed. You're painfully green;

I was disgraced long before that. Like you, I went to Washington, fired with the generous impulse to tell the truth. I began it. I saw Congressmen selling their votes daily. I saw the confidants of the Cabinet trafficking on their relations; I saw Senators bartering almost openly in the lobby—I saw—you remember Voltaire's catalogue of what he saw before he was twenty? Well, I saw all this, yet so insidiously, so dexterously done, that the most upright men, without a suspicion, were compromised in schemes that robbed the Treasury of millions. I was offered bribes right and left; I was threatened at first for talking about what I saw. Voltaire went to the Bastile to cool his ardor. They were more adroit who had to deal with me!"

He stopped and, again going to the window, looked out intently—then standing at the side, pulled the shade down—to the inexpressible astonishment of his stupefied listener.

"Why do I pull it down? Because, my friends opposite, who have their glasses fixed on this room, and who have done you the honor of watching you every instant since you have been here, may conceive a doubt of my address, or a suspicion of my fidelity. For you must know I am expected to make you see reason, and before I get through I know I shall. I will tell you my own story, as it will best illustrate your fix at this moment. I wrote all I saw to the home office. All the routine news was faithfully printed; but after the first week not a line of my exposures of corruption saw print. But I received no hint to stop; on the contrary, when I saw at the end of the Christmas recess that all the real work worth publishing was flung away, I wrote asking the meaning of it. I was on the 'Janus,' as you may remember, then. In due time I received a letter from Levison himself, commending my industry, approving my work, and commanding me not to omit a line of the disclosures I had been making. It wound up by increasing my salary. Of course I was amazed, amazed as you will be before I get through. At first I couldn't conjecture what it meant. I went to a friend—a leading Senator—and told him the story. He had helped me in penetrating some of the deviltry of the committee-rooms, and wondered like myself why nothing appeared in my paper. I think he began to suspect that I was

playing double, and I showed him my chief's letter as a vindication.

"He thought over the matter some time, and then told me that Levison was holding my disclosures to black-mail the culprits. He pointed out certain editorial references during the month that confirmed the conjecture. He advised me to go to the telegraph-office and get copies of all my dispatches, and in future to make duplicates. It was sound advice, but it brought me to ruin. You don't happen to have a drop of brandy? Well, we can ring for some. I went to the telegraph people," he continued, as he gave the bell-rope a vigorous pull; "the superintendent said he would have the copy looked up and sent to me. A day or two later he sent for me and declared that the copy had been asked for by the New York office as fast as it went over the wires, and that I must apply there. I did apply there, but received an evasive note, referring me to Levison. I dropped the matter, but thenceforth preserved copy, and so far as I could rewrote the substance of all I had sent at first. I incautiously spoke of what I was doing to a fellow-journalist, and of my purpose of publishing a book when the session closed.

"One morning, as I was going up to the House gallery, Joe Blind, the king of the lobby, tapped me on the shoulder and asked me to go into the Speaker's room a moment. It was empty. He pushed a chair toward me and sat down on the Speaker's chair. He narrated all that I have gone over, and wound up by offering me five thousand dollars, or an appointment to any consulship I might name, with a thousand dollars' outfit! I rejected it indignantly. He smiled, and warned me that I couldn't fight the men behind him. That very night my office was broken open and all my manuscript carried off. A few days later I was called into the war-claims room as I was passing from the House restaurant—you know it is quite dark. As I entered the room, an envelope was thrust into my hand, and a voice said: 'There, Sanders, is news that will make you famous; but I don't want to be known.' Unsuspicious of a trick, I went to the window and opened the envelope. There were in it a number of papers and a five-hundred-dollar greenback.

"Confounded, I turned to catch the man, and was confronted by a detective of the secret service, and a member of the war-claims committee. In my agitation I thrust the envelope into my pocket. 'Mr. Sanders, it is alleged that you have made this room a lobbyist reception rendezvous, and, further, that you have the wages of the lobby in your possession at this moment. In the interests of your own reputation, I ask to see that package that this officer saw you receive.'

"Wasn't that handsomely done?" asked Sanders, as Fred pulled a chair over and sat down by the door, amazed and interested. "It's like a Minerva novel; but it is true"—"and," he added after a pause, "I am not sure that it wasn't just as well, for, from what I've since learned, I should have met the same fate some other time and some other way, for I'm not the only one money has found the means of making an ally. Indeed, I dare say that you are almost the only one I know that has not grounded arms. Of course, I could not make an explanation that would hold water; not only the facts were against me, but my judges were the paid agents of the men interested. I was disgraced. The 'Janus' dismissed me by telegraph. My place was taken by a man who has regularly drawn five thousand dollars a year since from the lobby fund. Now, how does the situation strike you?" he asked, jocularly; "do you begin to see just where you are?"

"No, I don't see what earthly resemblance there is between my situation and the awful wrong you describe. I—"

"My unchastened, ferocious lamb, don't you see that Birch is in the pay of the syndicate; that there are witnesses to the fact that the money of the league is in your possession; that one of the trusted leaders of the league was heard disputing with you as to the amount, and that as a conscientious journalist seeking to oppose knavery, I shall be obliged to write the occurrence to my paper; that the agent of the associated press, who is likewise in the councils of the syndicate, will send it to every journal in the Union; and that to-morrow, dismissed from the 'Atlas,' you can't get employment for your pen in the country?"

The whole story was told with a humorous suggestion, in ac-

cent and gesture, that made the effect infinitely more impressive than the mere words can convey any idea of.

Fred Carew stared with a comic stupefaction that elicited a roar of laughter from the other. Before Sanders had ended the story, the brandy came, and he threw off a copious draught, washing it down with a thimbleful of water. As Fred sat quite overpowered, Sanders, reaching over the brandy-glass, picked up the envelope, and, holding it up to the light, asked suddenly:

"'The woman who hesitates is lost'—the man likewise; how much do you suppose they rate you at? By George, it's rather flattering to a fledgling like you—not yet twenty-five! I was a veteran of thirty when they rated me at five hundred dollars." He got up and held the envelope under Fred's nose. "A thousand dollars, my boy, a cool thousand, to secure you to the cause of progress and great moral ideas! Come, open it—or shall I?"

"No, I won't open it; and you sha'n't until a witness is present."

He went to the rope and rang the bell; then, placing his back against the door, he held out his hand appealingly as the other made as if to go out.

"No, Sanders; you don't leave this room until that accursed envelope is gone. Oh, you may thrash me," he added, as he saw the other clinching his fists, "but you shall not leave the room unless you leave me dead!"

Sanders measured the slight frame before him, and stretched out an athlete's arm to pulverize him. At that very moment a knock was heard at the door. Fred, without moving from his place, called out: "Get the key and come through the next room. This door can't be opened. Hurry!" he shouted; "there is a life in danger!" With this he turned the key in the door and slipped it into his pocket. Now, as it happened, his table was against the door of the adjoining room, and no one could pass in or out, even were the door open, without leaping over or going under it. Sanders noticed the circumstance, and went toward the table as if to move it. Among the paper, scattered in confusion, lay a glittering Spanish blade, beautifully chiseled and sharp-pointed. The eyes of both rested on it at the same moment, but, as Fred was nearest, he seized it, and said determinedly:

"If you molest me, or touch the table, I will use this! Ah!"—

The sound of a key and the murmur of excited voices were heard, and the door was suddenly flung open. The landlord and a half-dozen people blocked the crowded space visible through the door. Sanders was as effectually hemmed in as if there had been no door. Pointing to the envelope on the table, Fred said, in clear, defiant tones:

"There, Mr. Taney, is an envelope the contents of which are unknown to me. It was placed there by a miscreant who says it contains money. It is not my money, and I ask you to take it and hold it subject to its owner, or do with it what seems proper, and I ask you all to be witness that the envelope is unbroken!"

The landlord, all of a tremble, picked up the packet, read the address, weighed it reflectively, held it to the light, and said:

"It is addressed to you, as you see, Mr. Carew. Suppose you write what you have just said on it?"

"No, I will not touch it! But I will write what you want on a separate slip of paper.—Meanwhile, Sanders, if your friends are waiting, you can get out," Fred couldn't help saying a little sardonically, as his rival stood wrathfully eying the crowded doorway. As the crowd cleared away, Sanders was the last to leave the room. As he passed the threshold, he turned:

"You are not a very long-headed young man for a reformer. You'd better take lessons before you go out again, or ask Blackdaw to send a guardian with you to watch over your virtue!"

The next day Fred found to his cost what this meant. The story of his encounter with the labor leader was set forth in full. It was made to appear, however, that the guilty correspondent and leaguer had been surprised—the former receiving, and the latter paying, the bribe-money. All the circumstances were ingeniously made to corroborate the charge, and when Fred appeared on the street he knew, before reading the local papers, that something had come to pass.

People looked at him curiously, and men who had been helpful and profuse in courtesies to the representative of the "Atlas," affected to be busy or preoccupied when he spoke to them. It

was all explained when he saw the accounts, and he recognized the handiwork of Sanders as the originator of the fabrication. He looked for him all day; but he was not to be found. He learned later that he had gone on a trip to the mines with several members of the interested corporation. He resolved to follow, and packed his portmanteau in hot haste. As he left his room, a telegram was handed him. It contained four words: "Come to New York—Blackdaw."

His business with Sanders must be postponed. That was his first thought. Well, it didn't matter. He would have abundant chance to settle with him in the future. Tortured by vague fears of something sinister, he spent a miserable day in the train, and at midnight, entering the office, told Tony to tell Mr. Blackdaw that he was come. The atmosphere struck him with chill apprehension. The looks of his comrades told the story. They never alluded to the scandalous concoction in the morning papers. The "Atlas" had not, of course, published it, but his heart froze as he saw in the averted faces of his associates that they believed it. He sat buried in a sort of stupor awaiting the summons to the inner room. The City-Hall clock was striking three when Tony tapped him on the shoulder, and told him Mr. Blackdaw would see him. It was four o'clock when, all being said and summed up, Blackdaw concluded, in a not unkindly tone, "I believe you, as I say, but the 'Atlas' must be like the wife of Cæsar, and, though I am reluctant to lose your undisputed abilities, I dare not retain you on the force."

CHAPTER IV.

A CHAPTER FROM CHESTERFIELD.

IN May, one morning, as Archy ran his eye over the steamship arrivals, he saw the names of Grimstone and daughter among the passengers by the Scythia. "Rupert," as he was almost universally called, had changed his way of living a good deal

since Grimstone's check had given a money value. He removed from the faded gentility of Waverley Place to a charming suite on the second floor of a handsome house, given up wholly to bachelor quarters, on Madison Square. It was the very dream of an *appartement de garçon*, and its French flavor created a fury of imitation, which soon found a hundred of his rich friends similarly lodged. Here he gave the most fascinating breakfasts, and sometimes, after the opera, *petits soupers*, enlivened by the gayest *soubrettes en vogue*.

On Sunday evenings he invited an exclusive few to *musicales*, where the most sensuous of classic music was interluded by airily piquant *conversazione*. Rupert was not only the Amphitryon of these symposia, he was the magnet of every reserve of wit or talent in those he brought about him. Prodigious as his social and literary triumphs had been before, he became the regent of elegance and taste—when the town read one morning that "his Imperial Highness the Archduke Alexis" had breakfasted in the Madison Square cenacle, and had returned at midnight and joined in a delicious duet from the godless *opéra-bouffes* distracting the town at the Grand Opera-House. That riveted the social *cachet* of the most imperial *ton* upon the adored publicist. Thereafter, New York was at his feet, as the saying is. He could pick his preserves without a grimace. But the world doesn't give its whole heart to the ravisher of its favors. Accession by revolution, or favor, implies abdication, and there are always some sensibilities to wound, no matter how trivial the triumph. The Cavaliers of Charles didn't relish the glories of Monk; the tatterdemalion heroes of the Revolution resented the young Bonaparte's leap to leadership. I dare say there were plenty besides the fatuous Mrs. Potiphar who relished Joseph's translation from the splendors of the palace to the tripod of the prison!

There was an envious wonder, faintly expressed by some as to the source of such magnificence, as threw the prodigalities of the heirs-apparent of the most opulent in the shade. Everybody knew that the "Atlas" couldn't afford him the means to rival the sons of the Castors and the Statendykes. He had been seen in Wall Street, it was rumored, and then he was set down as a speculator;

and the sagacious set a limit to this Sardanapalian splendor. But the truth was that Rupert made no such expenditure as his *fêtes* implied. He knew perfectly the value of money. His whole training had taught him that. He had been a keen observer abroad, and brought back with him a method in expenditure that gave him fourfold the value of his money that those without his faculty got. His wines, which were incomparable in flavor, bouquet, and variety, were sent him through the agency of an energetic consul in France, who, while serving the Government, maintained his interest in a wine-trade in Baltimore. His feasts were prepared by his own cook in the kitchen of a modest restaurant in Union Square.

His equipages were rather artistic than sumptuous, and the most costly of the assemblies, that struck his millionaire guests with wonder, really cost less than a noisy dinner at Delmanzio's, served to a dozen. The grand air became him, that every one owned. If he loved fine things, it was always remarked that he was well and properly placed when surrounded by them. He could put on a glove with such grace that the women who saw him would have kissed his hand. He could present a gentleman to a lady with an ease that gave the man a peculiar standing and appreciation in the eyes of the lady. He could say "thank you" with an inflection that made the commonplace like the condensation of a sonnet. Above all, he could look the person he permitted to become intimate squarely and serenely in the eye. He was, as you may see, a man for whom time had no terrors! When he went to the "Atlas" now, which was very rare, he drove in an insinuatingly modest *coupé*—rigidly devoid of that snare to the weak, a coat-of-arms, or any paneled pretense to a past for which he didn't care a fig. His stay in the "abhorred barrack," as he called the venerable rats' nest, where his glories came to blossom, was only long enough to get his flattered chief and carry him off to a dainty dinner to meet some personage in the day's renown.

He wrote with scrupulous regularity for the journal still, but sent the "copy" down by messenger. It was "to keep his hand in," he explained to his sauntering friends, from whom he often excused himself "to keep the press going." His *bibelots*, *bric-à-*

brac, statuary, and paintings were the despair of the art-collectors, who strove in vain to discover the mines whence they had been drawn. He thus drew a select audience of artists, eager to study the taste which the town approved. He still persisted, to those who rallied him on the waste of his genius, that he was a journalist, and nothing else; that he hadn't the imagination for fiction, or the aptitude for construction, even if he could narrate well. He gave out that some day he proposed writing a philosophical novel to point out the dangers of the ballot; but this was taken as a joke. His leaders in the "Atlas" showed no signs of losing the vigor and delicate literary flavor that had won public delight. His audacity in attack grew, as the sense of independence derived from his lucky speculation became confirmed. It was the policy of the "Atlas" at that time to defeat the aspirations of the leaders of the Optimate party, which had become corrupt from long possession of place. Archy's attacks, based on his intimacy with the leading Optimate and their methods, aroused public attention, generally indifferent to political issues, and interested mostly in men.

For some years it had been requisite to a citizen's standing that he should uphold the Optimate, and, when the elegant young Hilliard took up the lance against them, there was an interregnum of social chaos. The other party, the Ultrocrats, a sort of Adullamite *Schwärmeri*, had long been socially ostracized. Their leaders, though for the most part men of great learning, illustrious parts, and unblemished lives, were regarded as *doctrinaires*. They were believed to be advocates of dangerous and subversive theories.

They had been suspected of a leaning for the rebels during the civil war, though they claimed, and the statistics showed, that, when the war began, the Ultrocrats were the ruling party in the country, and both the rank and file of the army went forth from the distinctively Ultrocratic States. The attitude of the "Atlas" and the intrepid truths of its free-lance gradually modified public opinion, and there were many of the Optimate who secretly began to doubt if their party were really the elect, after all. This status of parties contributed to "Rupert's" personal importance. The Optimate leaders in New York and Washington soon discovered the identity of this masked David,

whose sling was gouging the eyes from their head. The Sybarite retreat in Madison Square was often invaded by the trusted and potent manipulators of the party, come to wrestle with the rebellious Saul, and lead him to the voice and the light of the Covenant on the Potomac. But the young man dismissed them with some pleasantry so subtile that it was not until they repeated his phrases to the more penetrating chief at the capital, that the aptness and irony were discovered.

This morning, as Grimstone's name recalled the past, the young man approved of himself thoroughly. He glanced at the mirror, covering the whole wall between the mantel and the ceiling, and smiled complacently at his rosy cheeks, his clear hazel eyes, and graceful tawny mustache, falling in a golden sweep over the corners of his decisive mouth. He exulted in the sense of youth, the consciousness of power, the assurance of a beginning of the wealth he dreamed, and the certainty that he knew how, and had the ability, to realize it. The Grimstones had come upon the scene at just the time he would have ordered had he been master of their movements. Every one was talking of him; every one was quoting him; his handsome, dreamy face was in the current illustrated periodicals. He felt as tranquilly master of the destinies hovering between him and his aims as Richelieu when he held the threads of the feudal treasons in his hands. While these grandiose reflections were passing through his mind, Fred Carew's card was handed him. He had not seen his quondam friend since his dismissal, and, curious to learn his doings and whereabouts, he bade the domestic show him in.

The luckless Fred was much thinner, and pitiably care-worn. Archy almost blushed as the poor boy's eyes wandered from the luxurious trappings of the breakfast-room to his own. He dropped his first indolent intent, and went a step forward to give the lad his hand, expressing sincere pleasure at seeing him. Fred, to divert the conversation from himself, plunged into the object of his visit.

"I came in only to say that I had seen the Grimstones. They are charming. I got a note yesterday inviting me to dine with them at the Clarendon. I went last night. Miss Grimstone is

delightful, simple—no pretense, no lady-loftiness nor fuss. The old lady is very reserved, but must be a saint—at least she looks it. Indeed, unless she were, I don't see how she could endure Grimstone. He did his best to be agreeable to me, but I could fancy all the time that he was wondering at my right to live without the possession of a million. They spoke of you—Miss Grimstone did, that is. Old Grim never alluded to you. She said—Miss Grim—that she would be happy to have you call."

Archy lifted his eyebrows: "I'm just sitting down to breakfast; join me. Let us demolish the Grims with a bird."

"Oh, dear, no! I couldn't think of intruding on such grandeur. I don't think I should know how to manage your *articles de luxe*. Isn't that the way you'd speak of them in French?" and Fred, half laughing, half sighing, sank down in the place consecrated by Prince Rupert himself, as he afterward described it.

"Don't be silly, gentle boy, whom wisdom will never make knowing, nor the world a help to himself. Sit there, sip your coffee, and mingle, with the mastication of Réné's best-cooked bird, your finest phrase to paint the gracious Grim person. Come, tell me—is she pretty? Is she *comme il faut?*"

Fred held the fragrant cup to his lips, and said, meditatively: "No, she is not pretty. Her figure is awkward, her arms long. I was going to say her feet are large, but I didn't see them; however, as her hands are large and honest, her feet must follow the rule in anatomy. But her eyes—well, I never saw a gazelle, so I can't say they are like a gazelle's; but I can say they are like a cow's."

Archy found his seat too contracted to contain the explosion of laughter this *naïve* comparison elicited.

"You needn't laugh. If you had ever been on a farm and looked into the eye of a contemplative cow—"

Another outburst of laughter brought Fred's original description to a halt.

"Don't mind me, my unconquerable child of nature. I don't know much about cows' eyes, it is true, but, in all my catholic range of reading, I never before heard a maid's eyes compared with the bovine's." (Archy had evidently forgotten his Homer—

βοῶπις ποτνια Ἥρη—or was, perhaps, testing Fred's familiarity with the classics.)

"The more's the pity. I can tell you, from a long study of them, there's nothing in the way of eyes so solemnly beautiful as the eyes of a contented cow."

"Let us hope that content may be the lot of the cow for the sake of the eye. But go on; the Grim has other artless charms, no doubt."

"Well, her eyes, as I was going to say, are hazel, soft, deep, and large—so large, that they seem to hide the upper part of their circle under the most shapely curve of the brow."

"Poor thing, what trouble she must have with them! We must invent a plan to get her forehead raised."

"Well, I won't go on. You're in a derisive mood, and I won't have such sweetness and goodness made a mock through my blundering. Just wait till you see her: you'll adore her—mark the prediction! If I had a million, I'd make love to her"—and Fred poured out and swallowed a bumper of Burgundy as a present compensation for the unattainable bliss which the lack of a million entailed.

"Yes," said Archy, pensively, "millions mate with millions. I know of many who have scuttled the bark of love on that rock."

"Grimstone?"

"Yes; he rules his daughter as he rules his railways. He holds the string of the house-latch, and pulls only when millions knock. Heigh-ho!" Archy paced the small space between the window and the table abstractedly, but, suddenly reminded that he was not alone, he sat down again, asking:

"Now tell me about yourself: what have you been doing since you quit the 'Atlas'?"

"I have done no regular work"—there was a gulping sound in the poor lad's throat, and he grew very white. "I have done pretty well with sketches for the periodicals, and space-work for the dailies. I'm thinking of going to Valedo soon. I have a proposal to edit the 'Eagle' there, and I fancy I shall accept."

"I think it would be an excellent thing for you. In this city journalism is overcrowded, as well as overworked. The rewards

are small, because the really desirable places are few. But the best of them aren't worth holding. There's Blackdaw: he gets seven thousand a year. For the same labor and anxiety, with the same talents and acquirements, he could easily make fifty thousand, and give up labor at a reasonable age. To-morrow, if the 'Atlas' happened to miss some important news, the stockholders would kick him out, as they have kicked out a half-dozen of his predecessors. A man must own his own journal to take true joy in the profession. Then he is really what the world believes him, the master of his pen, the independent reflex of the approved sentiments of the society he admires. As it is, the editor has no more to do with making the opinion of his paper than the printer who sets up the type. Wall Street, Washington, social coteries, the manipulating few—these really control the pens and administer the brains of the brilliant men who make up the majority of the workers on the New York press. I wouldn't take the editorship of the most influential journal in the Union unless I owned it, or controlled it indisputably."

Fred was about to add his own testimony to this gloomy view, but wisely halted on second thought. He would only be condemning Blackdaw by exposing his own wrongs, and he knew that Archy was sword and shield with him.

"Yes, I think I shall go in a few weeks. I shall be at home, you know? Valedo has a great future, I am told."

"Besides, you'll be a neighbor to our damosel with the wondrous eyes—eh?"

"Oh, as for that, I shall trouble myself very little about her."

"By-the-way, what are the politics of the 'Eagle'?"

"Ultrocrat, when I take hold."

"Good Heavens! you can't stand that—it would damn you; you couldn't enter a decent door in Valedo. Here it is different; most of the old families were brought up in the traditions of that party, and the portraits of Jefferson and Jackson are the only works of art that adorn their ancient halls. But in a community like Valedo, settled by Western New-Yorkers and New-Englanders, the party is only another name for the ruff-scuff, the foreigners, and all manner of objectionable folk. No, no, my boy, you must decline

that; with your capacities and energy you can find congenial employment where you may be identified with the Optimate. That is bound to be the party for this country for the next fifty years. It has all the money, all the churches, all the *élan* of assured caste."

"It is partly because it has much of these that I fear and loathe it. I wouldn't be a member of that party any more than I would be a Bonapartist in France, a Junker in Germany, or a Tory in England. Why, Hilliard, if half you've written in the 'Atlas' be true, the party is led by a gang of moral lepers—not a man among them honest, virtuous, decent, or sincere. Most of the great patriots we revered as young men have turned into the Ultrocrat ranks as the only hope for the future. It was your own exposure of the odious means by which the party has held and is holding itself in power, that first shook my faith in it. My own experience," he added quietly, "has shown me that you have not told half its turpitude."

"Hey-day, young man! it is to correct, not to kill, the party that we are leeching it. You will see it reformed by-and-by. You must not take politics in earnest; much of the hectoring we do is only *pour rire*, as they say in France."

"They are true words, spoken in jest if they are *pour rire*, and I will never again uphold a party that I know to be ruled by secret, sinister, and anti-American methods and principles."

At this moment the waiter handed his master a card.

"Say that I will be with him presently," and Archy bade Fred to be in no hurry; but the young man arose, saying:

"I may as well say good-by now, as I shall not probably see you again. When you hear of me next it will be as editor of the 'Eagle.'"

"Well, good luck to you, and bad luck to the 'Eagle,' though you're just the man to make it scream loud enough for the whole continent to grow familiar with its music." Leading the way, laughing, the youthful sage bade the friend, that had given him the chance for fame and fortune, a gay and careless adieu, neither thinking nor caring whether they should ever meet again. Fred crossed over under the shimmering foliage of the park, caring as

little. He felt like cursing himself for breaking bread and salt with the "insolent *parvenu*," as he called Archy between his teeth. But Fred, no more than the favored who came in contact with that gay, masterful, insidiously domineering personality, thought of prepossessions when Archy's syllabub seductions were in his ears, and the irresistible manner exerted even in the slightest. He had really consented to carry Miss Grimstone's message, as a sort of final assertion of equality with the eagle he had known wingless. But instead of a messenger of greatness, he had been turned into a creature of ridicule, a booby flung between the ermine of beauty and the purple of power. He had one satisfaction—he had told the upstart but half the story. He had withheld Miss Grimstone's kind apology for her father's *brusquerie*, and her hope that Mr. Hilliard would give her a chance to show him that his admirable conduct was sympathetically appreciated by her, before the world found that from him anything else would be impossible! Fred sat under the trees and exulted in this artless treason, as he saw the victim of it trip down the brown-stone steps with Blackdaw and saunter toward Fifth Avenue.

He had grown graver and paler since we saw him last. His loss of place was a continual nightmare. At first he thought people stared at him in the street, with intention, to mark the man disgraced for bribery; for even had the "Atlas" been loyal, the charge was taken up with malignant delight in the columns of all the "Atlas's" rivals, and flaccid sarcasm poured upon the "æsthetic organ of purity and reform," as the medium of Fred's downfall was derisively styled.

Levison, the editor of the "Janus," the chief rival of the "Atlas," who hated Blackdaw with passionate hatred, wrote the miserable young man to call on him: he had something to propose. Fred resolved to reject any offer of employment on the journal, but went nevertheless. He had never met this editor, but in common with the craft had greatly admired him, until Sanders's scorching daylight had revealed his vicious methods. Levison was adored in his journal. His manners were in strong contrast with his rival Blackdaw's. The latter was a disciplinarian, carrying his autocracy to the most capricious martinetism. Levison practiced the *faux*

bonhomme. He was affable, equal, and in no sense impersonal. He was as familiar with the humble reporters in the city room as he was condescendingly confidential in the editorial council. He welcomed Fred with effusive warmth, talked lightly of the "Janus" and its destinies, and then added, when he thought the young man captivated:

"I have sent for you, Mr. Carew to offer you an engagement. Of course, until this unlucky scrape has blown over, you can't be openly placed on the corps. That, however, need make no difference either in pay or appreciation. What I propose is this: we want to expose the hollowness of the 'Atlas' fellows, and show the country that the present attitude of the paper is a blackmailing scheme, craftily calculated to intimidate General Ajax, who, being no politician, may have made some mistakes, as we were the first to point out, in the interests of the party, not our own. Now, what we want from you, and what I'm convinced you can do better than any other man in the profession, is to write a series of scorching sketches of the 'Atlas' editor and his inspiring influences. You must have seen the rabble of self-seekers that haunt the place. To your own observation I can add copious notes, for we have had Blackdaw, Hilliard, and the chief writers under close espionage for months. We have already enough verified data to damn the influence of the journal, and destroy Blackdaw's standing as a man. Hilliard is, however, harder to get at. I am told that you were his sponsor on the 'Atlas.' Now, if we could lay our hands on the source of his present puzzling prosperity, we should spike his guns. He seems to have grown rich in a week. Senator Killgore declares that his people are merely well to do, and that, the four years Hilliard was his secretary, he lived on his wages, fifty dollars per month. There is a future for you, and after the election an assurance of a consulship abroad! if you prefer that to give time for the scandal to blow over."

Fred had learned something from his late miserable experience, and he had sufficient address to conceal his abhorrence of the man, as, leaning back in his revolving-chair, he waved a colossal ivory paper-cutter to an inaudible strain:

"You are immensely kind, Mr. Levison, but I'm not at liberty to accept the proposition. I have about concluded arrangements to go to Valedo. I am offered charge of the 'Eagle.' The pay is good, the work congenial, and my folks live there."

"But the paper is Ultrocratic in politics. Surely you don't belong to that detestable party?" exclaimed the editor in ungovernable astonishment. Fred laughed.

"Yes, sir, I'm a convert to that faith, and shall do my best to make its candidates win, and its principles the conviction of the people."

"Ah! well, in that case, of course, we could make no arrangement. The 'Janus' couldn't have any one of that faith nourished on its revenues," and the moralist resumed his pen as a signal that the conference was closed. Fred laughed softly to himself as he groped his way down the dark stairs. Only a few years before, Levison had been an Ultrocrat, and taken part in the councils of its candidates!

The young man began to conceive a shuddering fear of this rapacious, malign power that he had but a few months before regarded as the safeguard of morals, religion, and order. His own reputation had been blasted by a man steeped, on his own confession, in the very helotry of vice; he had just been shown the artifices by which reputation might be smirched by wholesale, and the victims helpless as himself to rectify or mitigate the wrong. As he was turning into Broadway, some one slapped him familiarly on the shoulder, while a hearty and kindly voice said:

"Carew, my dear fellow, why haven't you been to see me? I never knew you had left us until a week after you had gone. I would have hunted you up, but I have been busy getting out my book, revising proofs, and yielding myself supinely to the tyranny of the press."

"Ah! Rivers, you're the first man that's given me a hand-shake in the old way. God bless you!" and Fred became speechless under the reaction. Rivers took his arm and said jovially:

"It's about lunch-time; come into Mouquin's, and let us talk over our troubles." He led the way, and, entering the restaurant

from the Ann Street side, mounted to one of the more secluded tables on the second floor.

"You look pale and depressed; we'll try some wine while the quails are browning. It isn't *en règle* according to the rubric of the *gourmets*, but when the heart is heavy the wits are dull; we'll try what ameliorating effect some white Chambertin will have on us."

Rivers was in those days, as he is still, one of the prominent men in his profession. He was forty-five, hale, and unmarried. Until Hilliard's novel audacity, sparkling epigrams, and lucid illustrations blazed out in the columns of the "Atlas," Rivers's, was the most conspicuous work on the New York press. His attainments were remarkable. He added to them a varied and wide observation. He had been a correspondent during the campaigns of the civil war, and for a time confidential secretary of the foremost statesman of the epoch. He knew men and parties intimately, and could have been, had there been a fiber of infidelity in his robust manliness, rich, and officially high placed. He was a patriarch in appearance, as compared with the younger men then universally employed in journalism. He was the helper of the unfortunate, the friend of the friendless, the purse of the needy, the guide of the stumbling. His mild blue eyes were the joy of the workroom, and his hearty monotone gave reassurance to many a timid novice, sweltering in the agony of untrained and unrecognized aptitudes. He had come to the "Atlas" some time after Fred's engagement there, and had taken pains to find him out, and compliment his report concerning a notorious criminal in the interior of the State. He was tireless in good offices of this sort, and many a man, now enjoying the best rewards of the profession, owes to Rivers's solicitous insight his first recognition in journalism. He had known Blackdaw in the West when he was a local reporter, and the two, though not intimate in their new relations, were on very cordial terms.

The *succès fou* won by Hilliard had rather eclipsed the commanding rank Rivers had held in the office, but he was a far better journalist than his rival, and his work, though not so dazzling, was more indispensable in the conduct of such a journal as the "Atlas."

"Let me begin, my son," he broke out cheerily, as the two sipped their wine, "by saying that I consider your treatment dastardly. I told Blackdaw so; you know his answer? To that I said, it was the duty of the powerful to protect the weak, doubly a duty when the weak have been borne down in their employ. I offered to get him testimony, proving the venality and untrustworthiness of Sanders, on whose word alone the charges against you rest. But he declared that while he believed the facts as you set them forth were true, the 'Atlas' couldn't afford to assume any new burdens. The fight against it is something unheard of —the Administration is bound to break it down. Its mail edition is almost annihilated. The postmasters throw the copies passing through their hands into the furnace by tons. The office in New York has permitted the 'Janus' to station forces of clerks in the distributing bureau at night, who copy the addresses from the 'Atlas' wrappers, clap them on the 'Janus,' and send them to our subscribers. Gradgrind's journal, with the odious caricatures of that clever scamp Schmutz, is substituted in the same way for our weekly edition. We only found it out when hundreds of inquiries came to the office, asking why the 'Atlas' was no longer received. It is a fight of two hundred thousand office-holders and two hundred millions of corporation money against one journal; if Blackdaw pulls through he will be the greatest man since Mirabeau, for the same influences are opposing him that confronted the French anarch: you can see he is forced into this cowardice and chicane."

"It's worse than that," interrupted Fred, hotly; "it is aiding and upholding black-mailing; it is stamping out the honor of journalism; and, mark my words, the crime will return upon Blackdaw himself."

"Oh, as for that, all you can say I agree to. Blackdaw is a man of profound calculation. He is, I think, without exception, the most self-engrossed nature I ever saw. He has set his heart on money and power, and he will have them, just as surely as you or I will never have them. No man or woman that can't help his ambition is of interest to him. Thanks to Hilliard, he is gradually solidifying his relations with the clique that controls the

fortunes of this country, and before ten years he will own the 'Atlas,' and use the executive chair at Washington as a footstool.

However, these are abstractions that don't concern us. I wanted to see you to tell you that young Morton has broken down at the night-desk on the 'Tomahawk,' and is going on a vacation. I wrote to Magnan, the editor, so soon as I heard it, asking him to give you the place until Morton can build up. Night editors are killed on an average of one every two years, and, of course, you would only accept it temporarily. But it would bring you under the eye of Magnan, whom I regard as the ablest manager and most accomplished man in the profession. He will see you; and he is an unerring judge of men. He is chivalrous, as he is intrepid. He will see the inhuman cruelty that has been done you, and he will fly full tilt at all the millions in Wall Street until you have been vindicated. He has the reputation of unscrupulousness, and the 'Tomahawk' is hated as much as it is feared. But he is a man of conscientious convictions, and an inextinguishable hatred of shams and the oppressions of the weak. His hearty contempt for Blackdaw, and his perpetual raillery of the 'Atlas,' are proof that he won't be slow in seizing this opportunity to disclose the hypocrisy of the one and the cowardice of the other."

Straightway after this conversation, Fred, armed with a letter from Rivers, presented himself to the mighty Magnan. He found him partitioned off in the corner of a vast upper floor in a loft that covered the whole building. There was none of the ceremonial observed in other offices, and the young man was ushered into the editorial presence on the mere presentation of his card. Magnan, did not look up at first, but plunged into the business without preliminary. He asked the applicant what he had done on the "Atlas," what he could do for the "Tomahawk," and, being briefly answered, finally leaned back, studying Fred from under shaggy, reddish eyebrows; apparently satisfied with the scrutiny, he said, rather abruptly:

"Very good; go out in the street and write us a column on the first thing that interests you—no adjectives, no parentheses, no fine writing, no gush, no sentiment, just the thing that interests you as you see it. Hand the copy to Mr. Pine, in the next

room. Good-day." As Fred reached the door, he was arrested by this final admonition:

"Don't forget, young man, that a joke sticks longer than a curse; this is an age of jokes," and, with a roar of laughter, the grisly Democritus plunged into his papers again.

Fred's contributions to the "Tomahawk" were received and printed without emendation or alteration; a fact Squeeze, the sub-editor, informed him, hitherto unknown in the annals of the journal. The pay was handsome, and the work less exacting than office-writing. So far as money went, Fred's fortunes were greatly bettered by the change from the "Atlas." Instead of the thirty dollars' salary per week, he now averaged sixty and seventy-five dollars. He wrote with amazing facility, and flooded the periodicals with sketches and short stories. His humorous vignettes in the "Tomahawk" achieved a success hardly less striking than Hilliard's work in the "Atlas"; but he could not reap any personal glory from them, as Magnan insisted on the profoundest anonymity, until his agents at work unraveling the plot that had ruined Fred had made ready their report. It was not, he knew very well, any Quixotic purpose of restoring his reputation that influenced Magnan. The incident would expose the men ruling the Optimate, and incidentally illustrate the shallowness of the "Atlas's" pretensions to sincerity. The young man's cleverness, however, gained him the strong good-will of the editor; and what was begun as a journalistic enterprise was in the end directed to compelling restitution to the victim. Magnan was as generous in his praise of his new collaborator as he had been niggard in promises; and Fred deserved all the praise he got. He had a shrewd humor and quick wit. He had read a great deal, and needed observation only to give his work balance. His style lacked the ample and pregnant illustrations that illumined Hilliard's impetuous periods. Nor could his work compare in the delicate aroma of humor and learning displayed in Hilliard's; but in vigor and force he often eclipsed him. New York, however, was intolerable to him. He felt miserably alone even in Broadway. His lodgings grew hateful. He resented the kindly-meant inquiries of friends as covert allusions to his disgrace. His old friend, Ma-

dame Leandre, pleaded with him in vain to come to her; she knew his misery, and believed with all her kind-heartedness in his spotlessness. She forbade her *salons* to one of the potentialities of the press who casually alluded to Fred's downfall as an example of the lengths to which the reigning thirst for sudden wealth was carrying the younger generation. She wrote a letter of ten pathetic pages to Blackdaw, vindicating her darling, of which, alas! that great man took note only of the lurid underscoring and frenzied punctuation.

CHAPTER V.

A GOLDEN MEAN.

WHATEVER her motive, Miss Grimstone was plainly bent on impressing Fred that she counted the July incident as a claim upon her good-will. The day after he had delivered her indirect message to the journalistic Autochthon, a pretty note, crested and perfumed, came, bidding him to dinner *en famille*, and the opera afterward. His first impulse was to refuse, as he was in no frame of mind for gayety or the conspicuity such association would give him in the polite world. He knew of no decent pretext for refusal, however, and reluctantly obeyed. He was welcomed with puzzling graciousness by the mother and daughter. Even Grimstone—the head of the house, who came in while the soup was serving—gave him the clammy ends of four fingers, in sign of toleration, if not welcome. There was another guest, evidently unexpected by the ladies, and whose person was unmistakably antipathetic to Miss Grimstone. Fred was startled by this presence when he heard the name McKay Dorr, for, though the most audacious captain in the army of money-makers, his name was held up to public hatred and abhorrence for the methods he had invented to amass his millions.

He was a man whose age was difficult to guess, but he was generally set down as forty-eight or fifty. Sometimes he looked

five years less, when his affairs went well; at others he would have passed for Salathiel. His small gray eyes were absolutely expressionless, and it was only by the wrinkling of the loose folds of flesh rolled under his eyebrows that any emotion could be discovered, whether of pleasure or of pain. It would be impossible, however, to associate pain with that passionless face, and Dorr passed as a sphinx in whose brain reposed the secret of transmuting bankrupt railways and white paper into gold. He was sometimes called a "railway-wrecker"; but it was observed that the wrecks were magically rehabilitated when the controlling shares passed into his hands. He had come to New York, no one knew exactly when, nor distinctly how long before. He was at first identified with a picturesque steamboat enterprise, intended to rival the railway lines to Iberia. His associate in this venture was, in his day, the joy of the comic caricaturists and the delight of journalistic satirists. His preternatural address in manipulating men, stocks, law-makers, and courts brought him the alliance of the financial interests of the land—partly because his peculiar genius was needed to further the stupendous schemes contemplated, and partly because he was a ruinous enemy. Grimstone, whose vast interests were more and more centering in New York, found this impassive tactician blocking him at nearly every vital point, and, finding that he could not be frightened, bullied, or cajoled, he had frankly joined forces. A stupendous scheme for a third rail to the Rocky Mountains was at that time resolved on by Grimstone. His recent trip to Europe had been on that business, while Dorr, potent in Congress and Legislature, had been arranging and manipulating franchises.

In spite of Miss Grimstone's vivacities, the dinner was not gay; Moloch doesn't count the festive amenities among the versatilities conferred by opulence.

The crude display which follows as the first token of self-made wealth had not at that time been worn down by the attrition of foreign travel and aristocratic imitation. That reflux of English repose and French ease, which now mark the opulent interior of New York, were then just in the bud of their present fine flower. Newport was then a watering-place, not a Mecca of the social

elect. Very tolerable people could pass the summer in the hotels, and suffer no mark of being *déclassé*. After the introductory nod at Fred, Dorr never addressed him a word, and his attentions to Mrs. and Miss Grimstone were of the most perfunctory brevity. The conversation divided the two parties as completely as if they had been a casual company at a public *table d'hôte*.

Dorr and his host talked in low, half-whispered monosyllables on the pending enterprise, using initials when it became necessary to mention names, quite as if the others at the table were irksome impediments to unrestrained talk.

Eleanor and her mother, however, masked this unmeant rudeness by assiduous attention and friendly cordiality. They made Fred feel himself a personage at the board, in spite of his exclusion from the conversation of the host and the preoccupation of the millionaire. It didn't need much tact to distract Fred from the engrossed financiers; both men were repellent to him. The ladies, on the other hand, won him completely. Mother and daughter bore a striking resemblance. Mrs. Grimstone was the counterpart of her daughter, whose physical and mental heritage, it could be seen at a glance, was all from the maternal side. The high cheek-bones, brilliant color, tall form, and willowy outlines of the daughter, were exaggerated in the somewhat faded face, sunken eyes, and attenuated figure of the mother. The eye had the same kindly hazel softness and luminous depth; the mouth, the same irregular largeness and piquancy of curve; the lips, the same ripe redness; the teeth, the same definite regularity and whiteness. Mrs. Grimstone was over fifty; and the velvet scarlet of her daughter's cheek had intensified into an almost hectic brilliancy. It was generally believed that she rouged; this, however, was owing to her Southern training, where it is popularly held that all women employ the artifices of the toilet, until recently used only in enhancing the charms of the beauties of the stage. Mother and daughter exhibited markedly their adored Kentucky origin by the seductive and familiar friendliness of manner peculiar to that region.

Mrs. Grimstone's voice was pitched in an irregular key—in the artificial tones remarked in Southern people. She was

adorned, too, in the taste of her girlhood. A profusion of jewels sparkled upon her large-jointed, lemon-colored fingers, and shone out of the still massy tresses of her deeply black hair. The gems were remarkable rather for the lack of æsthetic congruity than beauty. Garnets were predominant. They glistened with a dull luster on her throat, corsage, wrists, and hair, vividly suggestive of an oriental sultana, emphasizing her fading charms under a mask of precious amulets. Her gown was of the same *rococo* taste—deep wine-color, smothered in billows of fragile Spanish lace. Eleanor's apparel preserved the same tone, less the exaggeration. Diamond and sapphire vied with the glistening of garnets in her hair, on her white bodice, on her bare arms, in the twisted folds of the black Spanish lace, that fell in irregular breadths from her shoulders to her feet. The shimmer of her shining white gown, under the exquisite fabrics, gave her the effect of an *odalisque*, transplanted from the harem, to figure as a fine lady for an hour! It would not have been surprising, at any moment, to see the encumbering lace slip off, and the voluptuous figure, poised in the middle of the room, moving to the sensuous strain of the dulcimer.

"Daughter, you must excuse Dorr; we have a directors' meeting at eight o'clock," said Mr. Grimstone, as the coffee came. Fred thought that neither of the ladies looked severely disconcerted at this announcement; and when, a few minutes afterward, the two financiers withdrew, the access of gayety in Miss Grimstone's tone and manners convinced him that Dorr was peculiarly odious to her.

"Since you are left alone, Mr. Carew, we shall insist on remaining while you sip your *liqueur* and smoke. I wouldn't mind a cigarette myself, but mamma pretends to be scandalized at the idea of a girl smoking; though, I'm sure, in our own dear old Louisville, I know the most charming old grand-dames who smoke. Indeed, smoking is very common among old ladies, at least in the South."

"I shouldn't mind the smoking at all, Mr. Carew," rejoined Mrs. Grimstone; "but the habit isn't one that refined ladies in this country approve. One of the first recollections I have was

my grandmother in the chimney-corner, in the old plantation days, with a long pipe; possibly I shall smoke myself when I'm old; for you must know, sir, that I don't regard myself as an old woman, even with such a big girl as Nell by my side."

"Oh! dear, no, Mr. Carew; if you want to hold mamma's good graces, you must pay homage to her charms, not her virtues; she is my only rival—that is, the only one that gives me concern"; and Nell took her mother's hand and kissed it.

"I spoil my children. By-and-by, when Nell forgets herself, you'll hear her calling me 'Dick.' When she was a child she heard my sister calling me Delia, and as she lisped the name it settled into Dick, and Dick she calls me to this day."

"I didn't know you had other children, Mrs. Grimstone," said Fred, flattered by the intimacy into which he was so familiarly admitted.

"Yes; I have a son younger than Nell—Herbert. He graduates at Harvard this year."

"And he's a very charming fellow, Mr. Carew, and you and he shall become great friends. He's coming to-morrow," said Nell, as she rose; and, taking down an imperial photograph from its rest, handed it to the visitor. "There's a family resemblance, don't you think, in everything but the eyes, which are steel-gray, like papa's? He favors our side of the house—the Kentucky blood, that is."

"Yes, I think I should know him for your brother, and your mother's son; he has the same contour of face."

"Our large bones? No; his hands are beautifully small, and he can wear my shoes, though he is as tall as I am; and you'd never mistrust he wasn't an aristocrat. He takes after our Puritan ancestors," said Nell, laughing mischievously at her mother, who looked comically shocked.

"A Grimstone can dispense with lineage in these days of self-made princes," said Fred, unconscious of any satiric significance.

"That's what Mr. Grimstone says," rejoined the elder lady, with an approving, swan-like inclination of the head, regarding Fred with interest.

"There, Mr. Carew, you've touched the bolt of the door that hides this family's skeleton!"

"Nell!" There was a shade of reprimand in the tone.

"Yes, mamma; I'm indiscreet before a stranger. Never mind, you may put me on bread and water as a penance.—But, you know, Mr. Carew, I don't look on you as a stranger. I've known you a year."

"You're a sadly indulged girl, and no end of worry to your mother," interrupted the elder lady. "Come and get ready—we shall be late as it is.—Mr. Carew, you can have your cigar to yourself for a few minutes. You'll find the magazines and illustrated journals on the shelves; and, pray, make yourself comfortable."

When the ladies returned, Fred's eyes looked the approval he did not feel at liberty to openly express.

"Shall we do?" asked Eleanor, with a pretty affectation of demureness. "Shall you feel like a city cavalier with two *outré* country cousins?"

"You are ravishing, Miss Grimstone; you will ruin Nilsson's 'Mignon' by your sultana splendor," said Fred, quite sincerely.

"And, mamma, isn't she the ideal of a duchess? Did you ever see such an air?"

"You wicked girl, mocking your own mother! Unnatural child!"

"Indeed, Miss Nell's quite right," said Fred; "I shall feel that the audience is speculating on you as royalty *incognito*," and Fred's eyes attested that he was willing to believe that she was a veritable duchess; though, as he had never seen a duchess, the concession was not so flattering as it seemed to the elder beauty, who, however, was plainly very well satisfied.

That his hostess was no stranger in the city, the incessant salutations from all over the house, so soon as she was seated in the box, proved. Both ladies began to compare notes, and Fred heard the names of many of the people who figured at the charity-balls and social events, requiring adventitious methods to give them the sort of *éclat* requisite to captivate the coteries more *en évidence* socially. It was Nilsson's first season, and "Mignon's" first night. Besides the critical thousands who filled the great

hemicycle, intent more on the music than the fashion, the boxes were crowded with the well-bred mob, who seize the opera as an occasion for display and social conquest. There was a tumult of rapturous whispering that drowned the overture until the curtain arose on Ambrose Thomas's masterpiece. So soon as the *entr-acte* came, a score of young men appeared in the box to pay homage to the "Western Rose," as Miss Grimstone was nicknamed at the clubs. Fred watched the interchange of compliments and rather callow banter, wondering if vapidity and languid inanity were really the highest expression of wealth and refined surroundings. He was particularly amused at the utter ignoring of his own presence by the groups that came and went. The stare bestowed upon him was saved from superciliousness only by its fleeting brevity. He wondered if the ladies remarked it; but he couldn't decide. They were kept constantly in conversation, and he was glad when the crash of the music preluded the rising curtain again. He had not given mother or daughter credit for the *finesse* shown in keeping each group in movement, and he began to suspect that Nell was not the artless child of nature her *naïveté* at the dinner had led him to believe her to be.

The change that came over her on the withdrawal of her father recurred to him. One thing he was sure of: Miss Eleanor was more natural and unreserved when the cold eye of papa was no longer scrutinizing her; for his absorbed study of the girl gave the impression of something more than mere paternal complacency. When the curtain fell again, the renewal of the imposing train of the society men most in vogue made the box the focus of all the opposite circles of glasses. The talk was intolerable to Fred, and he was amazed at the patience of the lady in suggesting an interest she did not feel in the commonplaces of her languid adorers. She had asked him to point out Hilliard early in the evening, and he observed that, to whatever point her glasses were directed, they were sure in the end to rest on that group in the segment of the glittering circle where the social regent sat. He knew that she was waiting for him to propose bringing Hilliard to the box, and he suspected that he had been invited to join the party to do it. But he resolved that, if it were done, his hostess should command

it unequivocally. Many of the callers mentioned Hilliard's name; indeed, after the opera and the *diva*, his extraordinary advent in society was the topic of the time. *Escalandre* was not yet the staple of small talk even between married persons in public, and the egotistic inanities of the day were not marked by the florid maturity we have since attained. The world of *blasé* connoisseurs and unfledged *petits maîtres* was confined to the traveled few. German was not an unknown tongue; but, as now, it was more an inheritance than an accomplishment among the most pushing and dominant in the opulent world. The well-dressed phalanx that pendulates between the Fourteenth Street temple of the Philistines and the Fortieth Street *cénacle* of the *parvenu* were not then to be depended on by the directors to make the gala-night "a go"; nor could the worried *impresario* depend upon such an agency to play the part of *claque*, when fashion, absorbed in itself, neglected the stage. We had not in those days so universally sent our sons to England to acquire "form," nor our daughters to France to get *chic*, and the operatic art was like another—accepted on its merits.

"Has 'Rupert' been presented to you, Miss Grimstone?" asked one of the callers, an artist in renown.

"No; I'm dying to meet him. Do you know him?"

"I know him very well. May I bring him?"

"I shall be charmed." She turned to Fred as the artist quitted the box, and whispered, archly: "You must help me with that formidable person; I'm afraid I sha'n't know what to say to a person so clever. Is each phrase an epigram?"

Before Fred could reply, the artist appeared, ushering Hilliard. If Miss Grimstone was at all embarrassed, she did not show it. To Fred's great surprise, Archy was unaccountably self-conscious, or ill at ease. He touched on the common topics like any other worldling—the opera, the weather—alluded to the recent return from Europe, and then led the conversation to details of travel on the Continent. He rose to go as the orchestra commenced, hoping that this was not the last chance he should have to renew the subject. Eleanor inclined her head politely, and turned with a strange light in her eye to watch the stage.

"When Herbert comes, Mr. Carew," Nell said, as Fred bade her good-night at the Clarendon, "you must take a friendly interest in him. He has but few acquaintances in New York, and he will prize such a man as you."

Fred was completely mystified. He saw that the girl was perfectly indifferent to him—treated him, in fact, as a cousin, or very familiar friend—but why? He went home perplexed; and was not less amazed when the next day Miss Grimstone's compliments came, with an invitation to drive in the park. She was resolved to be friendly; and when, in the course of the drive, Fred unthinkingly let slip his meditated change to Valedo, she was quite effusive in her delight.

"It is such a dull place; nothing but business, no literary men, no artists, nothing but stocks, iron, corn, and money-making. If papa would consent, we should never see the place again."

"And still you rejoice that my lines are to be cast there?"

"Oh, you know the adage about misery. Then, when you are there we shall have a literary beginning. You know I have a great idea of your genius, and I expect wonderful things of you."

"Where did your idea— Surely you know nothing of my writing."

"Ah! that's a secret. I will tell you, though. I know Madame Leandre, and, before I leave town, I'm going to invite her to dinner with you. She adores you, I suppose you know."

"I know that she is too indulgent and too kind to me, and that is the only blemish that I know in her," said Fred, laughing.

"Well, she has commanded me to be good to you, and I am doing my best. Am I succeeding?"

"Perfectly; if I were your brother, you could not have been more considerate."

"By-the-way, Herbert comes to-morrow, and you must come to dinner. I'll send the carriage for you; no refusal, no excuse. I know your time's your own, and for the present, and because I command it—mine."

She looked at him archly, her cheeks glowing with health, and the most perfect honesty in her hazel eyes. Fred was confounded.

This, then, was the secret—Madame Leandre had busied herself in his behalf. He did not know whether to feel vexed or amused. He was decidedly "taken up" by the Grimstones. Herbert's coming was signalized, not by a feast *en famille*, as Miss Grimstone had said, but by an elaborate dinner-party, at which Fred met for the first time many of the conspicuous personages of the metropolitan court circle. Herbert exhibited all the exterior resemblance to his sister his photograph promised; but all that was explicitly frank and obtrusively seductive in her manner took a cast of underbred *aplomb* in the young man. His high color bordered on the hectic; and his mouth, which combined the coarse lines of his sister's with the indeterminate twitching of the mother's, left the impression of profligacy and a selfishness that might be aggressive cruelty. He was perfectly formed for his physique, and moved with the easy and assured grace of the ballet-master. His familiarity was effusive and condescending, in contrast with the artless indiscretion of his sister. He had a habit of looking any one with whom he was talking obliquely in the face, even when squarely in front of him. His manner with women was the refinement of libertine self-confidence—what the French describe in the word *fat*, which defines at once a coxcomb, a witling, and a man falsely at ease in his environments. He was evidently fond of his sister, and for her sake repressed his more exasperating condescension to Fred; but the latter could not help remarking them in the young man's dealing with others of his own age in the company. To his mother he was disrespectful to vulgarity, and made no more of her adoring partiality than if she had been the fawning mastiff in the vestibule. Before the company were seated, Miss Grimstone, taking Fred's arm, whispered:

"I am anxious you should make your best impression on Mrs. Albion Circester, whom you are to take in to dinner. She is the sister-in-law of Governor Mapes—you know her?"

"I have never met her, but I know of her. She was the best-known woman in Valedo when I was a youngster. I remember hearing of her breakfasts and dinners as something incredible in luxury and expense."

"Yes, poor thing! she bankrupted Circester before he died,

and now has barely income enough to live in a style that is a constant misery to her. She adores literary people, artists, singers, and the like, and still maintains a certain social authority. She has heard of you through Madame Leandre. But here she is."

Fred was presented to a lady so superb in dress, grace, and manner, that he could hardly realize that she was the mother of a son and daughter nearly as old as himself. She looked young as Miss Grimstone in the brightness of the eye, clarity of complexion, and elastic buoyancy of movement—a slight tendency to *embonpoint* was an added charm; the arms round, white, and perfectly molded, the neck lustrously white, the rare head poised on a throat exquisitely firm; her hands, Fred thought, would have perfectly replaced the missing palms of the Venus de Milo, an idea that, later in the evening, he confided to Miss Grimstone, who straightway repeated it to the mature beauty, and you may be sure the young man's place in Mrs. Circester's esteem was thereafter defined and secured! Her voice, too, matched the physical splendor of her person. I know no terms that describe it better than one at that time provoking public mirth, "vocal velvet," in its soft, pervasive, lingering sweetness. Her most commonplace phrase was caressingly tender, with the single blemish, common to most of our country-women, a metallic harshness in the upper register, which, with curious unconsciousness, she habitually fell into when talking with women, but rarely with men.

She had lived in Europe since her widowhood, to be near her boy and girl at school, and came home in that piquant aroma of whispered scandal that gives an added charm to the *personnel* of the group that leads in societies confirmed by traditions and material guarantees. She had been made an Egeria in the gay little court of Fritzhoff, where the godless grand-duke had scandalized his elderly and ugly consort by flagrant adoration of *die schöne Amerikanerin*. She had broken the grand-ducal heart by laughingly refusing the patent of a Gräfin at the price of a morganatic union after the facile morals of the Serene Highnesses of the *Vaterland*. Inability to pay down a *dot* of fifty thousand thalers had stood between her and the coronet of a legitimate countess—the Graf von Schoenberg having formally offered his holy Roman

parchment of nobility, his baronial ruins on the Moselle, and a prematurely decrepit person that bore marks of thirty years' debauchery, as an offset for her radiant charms, and the *dot*. It was asserted that she had made fruitless efforts to raise the money, imploring her kinsmen to advance it, and holding up the glory of a princely connection as being well worth the outlay.

But her kinsmen had refused. No one, however, believed that she had given up the purpose of wearing the Schoenberg coronet, for had she not, while in Paris, ordered cards in which the German name was translated into the imposing title of Countess de Beaumont? She still corresponded with her complaisant suitor, and bets were offered that she would raise the stake and take the *pas* over her rivals as the Countess de Beaumont. She was discreetly gracious to Fred, reminding him after each little effusive outbreak of the interest that she felt, "quite like a mother, having a great boy and girl of my own almost as big as yourself." Her daughter, in order to maintain the condition she was born in, lived most of the time with her aunt Mapes, while her son was finishing in Columbia College.

"You journalists are so clever and so powerful, that I mean to ask your interest for my Walter when he enters his uncle's law-office—you can do so much to help men in their profession, can't you?" she said, artlessly, as they sat at the table.

"I don't know where you get the idea, Mrs. Circester. I think journalists the most helpless workers in the whole range of professional life. There are a few, at the head of the craft, who can bear directly upon men in high place and the means by which they get there. But even these compromise that occult force that really great men in journalism prize most when they let politicians know that there is a reciprocity of powers. There is, however," he added, glancing at Miss Grimstone, who sat next to him, "a man who is not influenced by these considerations, who could advance your son's fortunes in diplomacy—Archibald Hilliard."

"Oh, I know Mr. Hilliard—Prince Rupert, as he is called. He dines with the Governor when he gives men's parties. I rather think I sha'n't like him. He's too much the vogue for a man. Such adulation is due only to a pretty woman."

"Not like Mr. Hilliard! Dear me! Mrs. Circester, you can't help it. He's like a sentiment of Byron, embodied in the most perfect shape a man can take. I don't see how any one can help liking him," expostulated Miss Grimstone, warmly.

"Ah, *ma chérie*, I might think so too if I had your *belle jeunesse*. But an old woman like me must be content with less soaring eagles than this Knickerbocker Alcibiades."

This was said in tones nearing protest, with a glance of such delicate homage for the younger beauty, as a woman sure of her own charms and her own place is alone magnanimous enough to display, openly, in the presence of men who may be called on to play tenderer parts than mere devotees.

"I don't wonder you are the despair of the maidens, and eclipse us with the other sex, if you bring the same spells to bear on them," said Eleanor, blushing prettily.

"You learned flattery too, I see, while you were in the land of fine phrases," said the mature siren, softly stealing a glance at Fred.

"Who, I?" he asked, innocently, his attention having been for a moment diverted.

"No, this witch here, who would have me forget my years and sorrows."

"If your sorrows are to be counted by your years, Mrs. Circester, you must have fallen asleep in your first happiness, and Time forgot you; or your years are like rich relations—they have kept you in mind, but neglected to visit you."

"How clever you are! I knew I should like you; we really must be very close friends—I feel that we are going to be," and she abstractedly laid her dainty, jeweled fingers confidingly on Fred's large hand, which at the moment happened to be on the table, in the act of balancing a rose-leaf fallen from a mass of flowers before his plate. Fred blushed and looked foolish; but, strong in her platonic impulse, Mrs. Circester gave the young man's hand an affectionate pressure, and laughed quite at ease as she withdrew her own.

"At my age I may adopt friends, if I please, and I *do* adopt you."

"I think I may pledge myself to be a friend," said Fred, a little awkwardly, stealing a glance at Miss Nell, to see if she gave signs of remarking his foolish look. But she was interested in the conversation of the personage next her, and had evidently missed the tender episode. When presently the ladies withdrew, Fred was about to go with them, as he didn't care to smoke, not knowing any of the persons present save Herbert, who was at the other end of the table. But, before he reached the door, the young man was at his side, and begged him to smoke a cigarette with him. He took a little case from his pocket and handed it to his guest, saying:

"The fellows smoke nothing but these at Cambridge now; we import them ourselves from London, but they are made of Turkish tobacco, and leave none of the heat and thirst of cigars."

Fred found them delicious, and settled down under their mild influence with a sense of indolent enjoyment he had never experienced before from tobacco. Cigarettes were at that time hardly known in this country, and the imported varieties were as unlike the nauseous stuff now passing under the name as real tea from the almond-leaves from which half of the contemporary tea is brewed. Soothed by the insidious aroma and gentle narcotic influence of the cigarette, Fred listened to the artless prattle of the collegian, wondering not a little at the family's evident partiality for himself. Herbert was talking to him within ten minutes as if they had known each other for years, with a good deal more than the unreserve of a boy.

"Nell has told me all about you, Carew," he exclaimed suddenly, "and I'm dying to have you introduce me to the newspaper men. You will show me about New York, won't you? I want to see life. It matures a fellow to see it. I want you, first of all, to take me behind the scenes and introduce me to the pretty actresses. Of course, you know them all, don't you?" and he looked with evident admiration at the astonished listener quite as a susceptible novice might at the favored of the Muses; but, without waiting to hear Fred's indignant protest, he continued, eagerly:

"I'm clean gone on 'Beauxjambes.' The troupe are playing at the Grand Opera, and, between you and me, that is the reason I

came on. They were in Boston last week, but I never could get an answer to my notes. I spent a hundred dollars in flowers. I know she got them, for I saw them on her in the ballet. If you can manage an introduction, I'll give a fizz supper, and we'll have a gay time. What?"

"I'm afraid you have an exaggerated notion of the functions of a journalist; you've certainly got the wrong impression of their standing with theatrical people. I've never seen the green-room of a theatre, and never to my knowledge saw an actress off the stage."

"Oh, that's all right," continued Herbert, with lively incredulity. "I know how you all talk. I know two or three reporters in Boston. They were always on the stage, always receiving notes from the women, and always feasting after the play. They used to take the fellows behind too, and introduce them right and left."

"No, I assure you I know none of them. I don't mean to say that it would be impossible. Many of our men are brought into relations with the theatres, and if you covet the thing so much I will present you to a dramatic editor. There's Hilliard, by-the-way. He entertains the actresses at fine suppers. He's just your man. You know him, I suppose?"

"No," said Herbert, his face lighting up, "but Nell does, and I can know him if I want to; but you'll be much better—you're nearer my own age," and he added, ingenuously, "you won't try to cut me out?"

Fred laughed. "No, you can depend on that; I'll leave you a clear field among the houris; I'm a poor hand in gallantry."

Herbert looked admiringly skeptical, as if he thought that this stoicism was merely the sign of a satiety that filled him with unspeakable envy. When they rejoined the ladies, Mrs. Circester was singing, to her own accompaniment, one of the little German songs that had worked on the tender sensibilities of her ducal adorer; and, as Fred neared the piano, she gave him a kind look of welcome, as much as to say she was playing for his approval, and only awaited his presence for the real inspiration of her art.

CHAPTER VI.

NOVUM ORGANUM.

ONE morning the "Tomahawk" came out with a broadside, narrating the plot by which Fred Carew's professional reputation had been blasted. The account took up six columns on the first page of the paper, "displayed" and sub-headed in the fashion first adopted by that journal. The story was made all the more effective in rehabilitating the victim, as his appearance and justification were apparently subsidiary to a most damaging exposure of the methods of the ruling cabal in the Optimate, and their servile obedience to the money power. Six columns of any one subject was a very rare event in the "Tomahawk," which had been founded and was conducted on the principle of condensation. There was nothing left to hypothesis; step by step the conspiracy was unfolded, from the bargain with the mine operators, months before the strike, to the terms of the agreement, whereby the Optimate majority in the Legislature bound themselves to pass the laws demanded by the syndicate. The receipts of some of the bribed members, and the acknowledgment of the faithless leaguer, were set forth in a form so explicit that there wasn't a pretext for quibble or evasion. The effect of the *exposé* was heightened by the capriciously humorous and severely unadorned form in which the story was told. Not an adjective, not an expression of sentiment—a bald, brutal narrative of fact, so convincing that it read like the summing up of a learned and impartial judge. On the editorial page, however, the master-hand accompanied the work of his reporters by one of those sardonically fanciful leaders which reduced the whole to the marrow. He pointed out the mingled hypocrisy and heartlessness of the "Atlas," which, while conscious of the cruel wrong done its own agent, for the basest of motives, remained silent, adding to the wrong done the public by crime done the man. Among the letters printed was one from a political personage in the interior to a great official, ending up with the line: "They call us thieves, because we run things for our own profit; for my part, I believe

in the motto that to the thieves belong the spoils." Quoting this, the editor exclaims: "It is, no doubt, true that to the thieves belong the spoils; but the cracksman and the sneak-thief are more manly than you; they are content with the victim's purse; they do not rob him of his good name." The event made what the journals call a profound sensation. The gist of the article was copied and commented on in some of the Optimate papers, with grudging admissions of its truth.

The "Atlas" and the "Janus" never referred to it in any way; and as soon as the Ultrocratic prints took it up, the Optimate, as in duty bound, sneered at the story as a campaign lie. In one sense, it vindicated Fred. Some of the profession, who had heard only one side of the affair, saw that he had been atrociously wronged, and the members at once drew up a paper, signed, irrespective of party, recognizing his blamelessness, and restoring him to his standing as one of the honored in the ranks. This paper contained the names of every journalist in the city, save Blackdaw, Hilliard, Sanders, and Levison; and Fred drew his own inferences when he noted these omissions. But while his innocence was thus accepted by his fellow-craftsmen, the public carried him up or down, according to their partisan sympathies. The Optimate put no trust in anything appearing in the "Tomahawk," and the Ultrocrats could not hear anything too vile to believe of their adversaries. A single word from the "Atlas" would have completed the work of the "Tomahawk;" but that word was never spoken. Rivers, with most of the force on the paper, gave a little "dinner of expiation," as he facetiously put it, at Mouquin's, in which there was a good deal of veiled sarcasm and expressive innuendo at the expense of Blackdaw, and the Antinous of the tripod, Hilliard—one vivacious rebel declaring that journalism would be more destructive than war, if such things went on unrebuked; for, while you took your life in your hands entering one, you put your character into the hands of pusillanimity on entering the other! What further picturesque paradoxes might have been inspired by the wine were drowned in a timely chorus, which enabled the company to break up without the general revolt and burning of bridges prompted by the first exhilarating

effects of the wine. As they were leaving, Fred drew Rivers's arm in his own and turned up Ann Street. He could not control himself sufficiently to speak until the two stood in front of St. Paul's.

"Rivers, God bless you! I owe everything to you; you are a man among men. When will it ever happen that I can show you what I feel, how much I owe you?"

"You're a very silly fellow," protested Rivers, pretending not to see the tears welling softly in the other's eyes. "You're sillier than silly. You must learn more worldliness. Have you been to see Magnan to thank him? What!" as the other shook his head. "Well, you are too much for patience! Go to-morrow morning and tell him you appreciate his good turn. He'll be gruff and cynical, but he likes honesty and innocence, and he'll secretly chuckle, while you think he's wishing you 'further,' as we say in California."

Fred could only wring the honest fellow's hand, as the other quitted him abruptly, to pass the next six hours in the editorial attic. The next morning, when Fred presented himself dubiously before Magnan, and murmured his grateful sense of his intervention, he was saluted with an uproarious "Ha!" so prolonged that he fancied it was the prelude of a stentorian solo.

"It was mighty interesting reading, wasn't it? I wish they'd rape the character of some other innocent—ha!"—and he chuckled with a colossal sense of enjoyment that left Fred speechless.

"Young man, you owe me no thanks; but I'm glad you've a sense of the fitness of things, and make them. I'm at work for the 'Tomahawk,' and the truth, which is without price elsewhere, has a fixed value here. We never turn it away; and when we get it, we share it with the world. That's the difference between us and our esteemed contemporaries. They have the foolish notion that truth is at the bottom of a well, and they let it lie there; or they leave it there, and put the lie in their columns—ha!"—and again a Boanerges laugh marked the sage's sense of his own playful humor. "Young man, you're doing first-rate work. Get the truth, tell the truth, and tell it with a laugh. Truth likes good company, and fades when buried in words and silly

sentiment." He turned to his desk, as if he had forgotten his work, and Fred knew that the conference was at an end.

Broadway seemed to take a new physiognomy as he walked homeward. The dapper clerk and the hurrying merchant had a kindlier look. He could meet the eyes of all of them, now the blot had been burned from his scutcheon; and though the fire had singed the persons of a good many that the country held in esteem, he felt that he was not over-vindictive in his vicarious office of inquisitor. He was at Union Square, when Herbert Grimstone's voice hailed him from a *coupé*. It was standing before a fashionable silversmith's. Herbert besought him to wait until Nell and Mrs. Circester returned. They were in the shop, and he was pestered to death attending them.

"When the ladies come out, we will go into Reynaud's. I've got the most stunning plan I want to talk to you about. I—"

At that moment Nell and Mrs. Circester came tripping to the *coupé*, and he stopped with a portentous wink, expressive of silence and prudence against any confidence in that direction. So soon as the ladies came within earshot, both began effusive felicitations to the hero of the "Tomahawk's" amusing *feuilleton*, as Mrs. Circester, with her fondness for Gallic substantives, called it. He was the talk of the town, they vivaciously assured him, and he must give them the chance of gathering the homage everybody was dying to pay him. Mrs. Circester was arranging for a "little affair," that would bring just the right sort of people together, and then he should see how every one adored the heroic qualities he had shown himself possessed of.

These flamboyant testimonies, delivered in *staccato* outbursts, confused Fred, and left him quite speechless, Herbert looking on the while with a grin of impatience. They thought it odious in Herbert to monopolize the hero, when, if he waited an hour until they had ended their commissions, they would take them both to luncheon, and then to the park for a drive. But Herbert was obstinate, and Nell did not persist when his sovereign pleasure was expressed. He compromised by engaging to bring Fred at five o'clock for the drive. The young despot carried him off, leaving the ladies at the door of a florid bazaar on the square. On one

of the side-streets Herbert entered a demure, unpretending, high-stooped house, where a very genteel waiter received them with deferential *empressement*. He addressed the young man as "Monsieur Herbert," and on a word from him conducted them to a small room on the second floor, in which a half-dozen square tables were spread with silky linen and glittering plate.

"This is the nearest thing to a Parisian restaurant in this country," said Herbert, seating himself at a table near the window, and, when the discreet waiter had taken the hats and canes, he continued: "We have stupendous times here—the fellows; and the beauty of it is, everything is orderly and quiet. You may take your pleasure here, as Mrs. Circester would say, *en cachet*. I was going to your rooms for you if I had not met you. I'm in the greatest luck. That note you gave me to Summers has done the work splendidly. I gave him a wine-supper after the play, and he has opened every stage-door in the city to me. I've captured Beauxjambes's manager by getting the fellows to take all the boxes and half the parquet for her benefit. It costs—but it's worth it; for I want to pay off some old scores on some of my set who carried the day when the troupe was in Boston."

Fred laughed, as the youth's confidence laid bare his double motive—self-indulgence and the revenge of wounded social *amour propre*. Herbert's familiarity with the place, and his standing as a liberal patron, could be guessed from the alacrity of the waiters, all of whom he addressed by name. His favorite wine came upon the table without the trouble of ordering it. Indeed, beyond a question or two, the young man gave himself no concern to order the dainty feast that was presently served. He prattled incessantly of himself, and the uproariously good time he had been enjoying. He had been to the theatre every night, and supped with the fellows afterward. He had not been in bed before three or four o'clock a single morning since he came! His adored Beauxjambes still remained obdurate; but she was to be at a little supper he had arranged after her benefit. Her manager had consented to bring her, in consideration of the tickets taken. He depended on Fred to bring two or three journalists of the

right sort to impress the manager with the influence of the Amphitryon; for money alone "can't awe those fellows," he added, with a touch of pensive wonder in his voice.

"But, it's money, after all, that brings about things, you see!" said Fred. "All the press influences in the country couldn't help schemes like yours, if you didn't have a bank account. The manager would have laughed at me, or any journalist audacious enough to suggest this bacchanal, if there hadn't been cash in hand first!"

"Yes, I think I know the value of money," said Herbert, with solemn deliberation. "It's a mighty good thing in every way. I've found it my best friend, and I mean to be faithful to it."

At this moment three or four heavy-eyed, dissipated young men entered, and, spying Herbert, came to the table, saluting him under various titles, all more or less descriptive, though fanciful. They carried on a loud conversation in syllables and phrases, the import of which Fred could not at first understand. He gathered, however, that they were financiers, as they dwelt a good deal on "checks," and "runs," and "breaking the bank." When the conversation had gone on for ten minutes, Herbert suddenly remembered his guest, and presented the new-comers as alumni of Harvard, Ralph Raikes, Reginald Romeyn, and Philip Van Dyck. They looked a little puzzled as Fred's name was mentioned, and Herbert, enjoying their mystification, asked:

"You've heard Carew's name, haven't you? But I'll bet a 'Pom' not one of you can tell where."

"You've lost, Bertie, my boy," said Van Dyck; "Mr. Carew's the hero of the 'Tomahawk' romance. Bring on your 'Pom'!"

The three looked curiously at Fred, now under cover of the laugh raised by Herbert's discomfiture, as the champagne, of the Pommery brand, was ordered.

"I've great respect for a head that can hold facts over a stomach filled with as much liquor as you've sampled during the last forty-eight hours," said Herbert, as the wine was poured out.

A great deal of wine was drunk, considerably out of proportion to the eating, the trio indulging liberally to arouse their flagging spirits. Fred gathered, from the disjointedly hilarious talk that

followed, that the young men had been passing the previous night in pleasure, and were now breakfasting. There were vague allusions to losses at cards; and rapacious divinities, whose combined exactions left the money-makers "strapped." Bertie magnificently offered to act as banker, and expansive demonstrations of fraternal fidelity followed. Bertie quite captivated the new-comers with his master-stroke *à propos* Beauxjambes. They were to be presented as Boston journalists, and their *rôle* was to be purely platonic.

"But there are to be more of the company than Beauxjambes?" Ralph asked, upbraidingly.

"Well, I hadn't thought of that; but, if you like, I will have Legerpied, Nudos, and Crêvecour invited. Come to think, that will be jollier. Carew is to act as host; so, whatever deference is paid, must be shown him"—whereat the others laughed uproariously.

It was five o'clock when Fred got up to go; the others gave no sign of ending the feast, though Herbert had half promised to join his sister in the drive. Fred reminded him of this, as the other accompanied him to the door, but the young man's flushed face and unsteady step were not likely to make him fit company for ladies. Herbert had not accepted the invitation to drive, but he made it a point of good-fellowship that Fred should go and tell Nell that he had been detained by college friends.

Eleanor was ready and waiting when Fred sent up his name, and she came down so suddenly to the reception-room, that the delinquent was caught adjusting his cravat. She did not seem to be annoyed by Bertie's faithlessness, and hurried her cavalier out to a pretty Victoria, which she insisted on driving herself, without even a footman. Her cheeks were aflame with health and enjoyment, and Fred thought her very beautiful, in spite of the *bizarre* feather in her hat, and the somewhat *prononcé* tone of her gown, her favorite colors, deep crimson, with lavish mingling of dead gold, and black lace twisted about the shoulders in thick folds. Outside the long gauntlet gloves of undressed kid, a large cluster diamond ring glittered in a setting of rubies, which, giving her some trouble as she held the reins, she handed to Fred to hold. She laughed cheerily as he slipped it on his little finger.

"I have thoroughly plebeian hands, you see; you could put that ring on your middle finger; you thought it would mortify me, didn't you, if you had?"

"No, I hadn't thought about it. I think your hands are very shapely; I don't see why size should control the standard of beauty. I'm sure one's hands ought to be in proportion to one's frame. You are very tall, but all your outlines are symmetrical; you would fire a sculptor at work on the Aphrodite of intellect and action," rejoined Fred, gallantly.

She looked at him in a sad, wistful way an instant, and then said, pensively, as the horses shot past an equipage from which she received a deferential salute:

"Only a man of imagination, like yourself, looks at such things in that poetic way. I am generally thought large and clumsy," she added, quite simply, as if it were a criticism against which she had nothing to urge.

"The opinion of the man, who can't see you as I see you, would, I should think, make little difference to you."

"Oh, yes; but I meet so few like you! All the men I know are bent on money, and social standing, and that sort of thing. Most of them are very tiresome, but one must be like them, or quit the world, and, I own, I like the world very much. I'm thoroughly frivolous; I like the admiration of even the men whose shallowness amuses me. There is Mr. Hilliard"—and she bowed, with a brighter crimson on her cheeks, as Hilliard, in a plain Tilbury, whirled by—"now, he is a man I know I shall like."

"Yes, I think you will," said Fred, but without any warmth in the assent. "He differs radically from the worldly school of men you describe; yet he is as thorough a worldling as lives."

"That's just what I like—a man whose brains give him rank, and yet who can outshine those who have only money or family to give them precedence; that's the sort of man a woman can interest herself in, without the risk of being sneered at for trying to force herself into social spheres that claim superior birth and place."

"I shouldn't fancy that considerations of this sort weighed much in this country, where we are all on the same plane, so far

as birth goes, and differ from each other only in degrees of means. So far as I can see, money gives its possessor all that birth and aristocratic tradition imply in other countries. I don't see wherein the self-made man of our day differs from the descendant of the self-made barons of William the Conqueror. I'm sure our barons deal more humanely with their serfs than the Normans did with their yeomen. Our barons rarely take life in their pillage of the weak." Fred was going to inveigh further, but suddenly recollected that he was talking to the daughter of one of the most hated of the "barons" he had in mind. Nell drove on pensively. They were in the leafy recesses of the park, far from the crowd, meeting only an occasional carriage. She drove as far as the Aqueduct and turned back, when the level rays of the sun brought out the shadows on the greensward like lace-work, wrought in fantastic forms by elfin hands. Fred declined the cordial invitation to remain and dine when they reached the hotel, alleging his promise to take Mrs. Albion Circester to Madame Leandre's soirée, and the necessity of finishing some work before he went.

As he accompanied that lady late in the evening from her *petit nid*, as she called the luxurious apartment on Fifth Avenue near Eighteenth Street, to Forty-fifth Street, she was full of animation and confidences. She asked him the names of the friends Herbert had presented. When he mentioned Romeyn, Van Dyck, and Raikes, she laughed softly.

"You must be careful how you become involved with that set. I don't say intimate, for without money they will never permit that, but they will make use of you."

"How could they make use of me?" asked Fred, laughing.

"You silly boy, you know nothing of the devouring world you are living in! These three young men are types of scores that you will meet on the lines you are now cast in. The Romeyns are a very old family; they lost most of their property in the bankruptcies in which half New York was involved by the war. They still hold up their heads in an exclusive *coterie*, that, while affecting to frown upon the *parvenu* element now at the front, secretly do all they can to bring their sons into relations with young women who can give them money in exchange for family distinction. These

three young men, on leaving college, were penniless. To go into trade would have ruined the family standing. All of them have nominal offices in great law-firms, but in fact gain their living and maintain their families by shopkeeping."

"By shopkeeping!" exclaimed Fred in astonishment.

"Yes, by shopkeeping. They manage it in this way: The Romeyns owned some property on the Bowery. It had long been rented as a pawn-shop. Reginald observed that his tenant was rich, and studied his methods awhile. The man's lease was out, and a renewal was refused unless he would consent to a partnership. The business was large, long established, and to move would be risky and perhaps disastrous, since Rex, as he is called, assured his tenant that the shop would be opened by some one else for the same business.

"The Romeyns now draw their revenues from this pawn-shop, and hardly any one is the wiser. Van Dyck is partner with Raikes in millinery-shops in Sixth Avenue and in Grand Street. They hold the property, ignoble, tumble-down old shells, which their estate owned in common, but, owing to the cotton crisis in 1860, they were unable to build up, as they had long intended. Oh, if I were a writer, as you are, I could tell some pretty tales of the means by which the flame of the sacred lamp of high life is kept burning. Beware of these young men, and dozens more that you will meet, whose means come from even more questionable enterprises. But keep on terms with them, penetrate beneath the supercilious mask they assume, and you will discover heart-burnings, envy, and discontent, to which your experience is as the plucking of rose-leaves. Now, in Madame Leandre's we shall meet another tribe of the same race, the social nomads, all eager to enter the Brahmin caste I have just sketched, and in their way as hollow and viciously sham. There are young architects, young painters, young and old journalists, women who edit fashion journals, women who do painting on china, and others who gain handsome *douceurs* by coaching the swell retail and *bric-à-brac* shops in matters of taste. It is money from the beginning to the end of the chapter. There won't be a smile given you to-night, that the person giving it does not count on gaining a percentage for the amiability shown."

"Good Heavens! my dear Mrs. Circester, don't go any farther; let us go home; I should stifle in such a loathsome atmosphere—I shouldn't be able to disguise my disgust. You must exaggerate; it can't be true!"

"Simple fellow, you ought to know all this better than I. Where are the keen observation and omniscience that I have heard the journalist possesses? You may thank me for putting you in the way of making your talents available."

Madame Leandre arose when she saw them. She was sitting enthroned at the farther end of a long, artistically arrayed *salon* in which the modern French taste prevailed. The panels of the walls were covered with charming originals, mostly foreign. It was more like the studio of a painter than the drawing-room of a lady of fashion, though that name would have exasperated the mature deity of all this æsthetic splendor. Madame Leandre was by birth French. She had lived the greater part of her life in Montreal, but her husband, a Frenchman, had begun life anew in New York, when the opening of the war brought his business in Canada to a ruinous suspension. He had prospered during the war in enterprises of a hazardous nature (many asserted blockade-running), and had left his widow in comfortable though not lavish circumstances in 1867. Madame Leandre was of a literary race. She was of the noble blood of the De Vigny, and the crest of the family marked all her maiden possessions. A manuscript of the poet was sacredly preserved in an exquisite cabinet, the shrine of her charming *salon*. She was small, dark, vivacious, and kindly, shrewdly penetrating as to character, but grotesquely blind in conjecturing motives; in other respects dealing with all who came within her range with the subjective instinct rather than the repulsive objective hinted by Mrs. Circester.

"You wicked boy, not to have come near me for a month! you don't deserve that I love you," she protested, as she shook hands rapturously with her *chère* "Albione," the name by which she insisted on calling Mrs. Circester, as she could not master that with sufficient volubility.—"And you have become the hero of the town, *méchant garçon*. But I love you all the same; I shall make the world adore you!"

There was an awkward moment of general presentation, the company not exceeding a dozen; and then a young girl, whose voice had been discovered by a reigning prima donna, took her place at the piano, and began in painful self-consciousness the jewel-song in "Faust." Fred took the opportunity to look again at the people, wondering if their faces were masked to the ignoble motives which his cynical friend had outlined.

But, in spite of his repugnance to crediting the degrading clew given him by his worldly patron, the possibility of its truth fixed itself on his mind as he watched the manœuvres of the company, now grown to forty or more. What had formerly mystified him, the disparate conditions of the people visiting the gay little hostess, received a solution; for, while the greater number were usually young men in journalism, rising politicians, and eminent personages of the stage, there were always a few social magnates mingled with these active minds, like gold-quartz imbedded in crystals. It was easy to detect the personages of this sort. Their vicinage was one of monosyllabic tribute, as the nearest expression of the dullness which the children of *esprit* imagined the normal condition of the opulent and the socially omnipotent.

Mrs. Circester came to his side as he stood watching the diversion, which had suddenly assumed a new meaning to him.

"You are a horribly imprudent confidant, *mon cher*. If Mrs. Van Bourseman had seen your face as I saw it a moment ago, she could have read exactly what you were thinking; that she was dull, supercilious, purse-proud, and designing, and that she was meanly pretending an interest in poor Madame Leandre's piebald company because she expected some advantage in some occult way."

"She would have read pretty closely, I must say; but what benefit can she derive other than amusement here?"

"Delicious unsophistication," said the philosopher, taking his arm and walking into a retired corner where their voices could not be heard. "Her husband was my brother-in-law's rival for the governorship. He was beaten in the convention, because it was shown that certain delegations had been 'fixed'—that is to say, the primaries had been bought up. The newspapers exploited the affair against him, and he is now courting them. Madame

Leandre has friends on every journal in the city, as you know, and if you watch the papers you will observe that of late they have been explaining how the worthy Van Bourseman was made the victim of a 'ring' of low politicians who inculpated his pure name in their own venality."

"And does Madame Leandre know the motives that inspire her guests?"

"Ah! madame is a woman of the world. She likes to study human nature. It is from people that she gathers about her that she gleans material for the books she writes. She probably knows that she couldn't make the oil of wit and the water of dullness mix unless there were an ingredient that reconciled these chemical opposites. She doesn't trouble herself about their motives. She is content to have a '*distingué salon*,' as she calls it,—*voilà tout*. I'm going to present you to Mrs. Van Bourseman presently, after I have had a chance to tell her who you are, and you will be able to verify what I've said. Before the evening's over you will receive other evidences more amusing. I'll wager a pair of gloves that the singer's patron, young Abeille, will make up to you, and ask your aid in giving Miss Hermit the influence of your pen when she makes her *début*."

Even while she was speaking, Madame Leandre, scattering gay epigrams right and left as she approached, came up, leaning on the arm of Abeille.

"I want you two bright people to know each other, *enfant terrible*," tapping Fred with her fan; "this is, after yourself, the brightest and best boy in New York: Mr. Leon Abeille—Mr. Carew."

"I'm afraid I shall have to depend on Madame Leandre for my good qualities, as I'm sure I shall have to for my brightness," said Abeille, meeting Fred's somewhat distant bow with a frank smile; "Madame Leandre is like Cuvier, she can reconstruct wit in others from the echo of her own."

"You see, Mr. Carew, you journalists do not monopolize all the spirit of the day."

"Oh, no, we are the shallow medium to make known the wit of others; the journalist is a mere photographist; he can't claim even the original function of the painter—he is the empty echo of

the voice of his social surroundings. Let society furnish the wit, and we'll embalm it," said Fred, abstractedly.

"Very well turned. Come, *ma chère*," Madame Leandre said, good-naturedly, carrying off Mrs. Circester, and leaving "the wits," as she said, "to fight it out with undivided mind."

Abeille proved himself well informed, well bred, and fairly entertaining. Fred chuckled when, at the end of ten minutes, his mentor returned, and not a word had been said about the *débutante*.

"The evening's not over yet," she said, in answer to his significant look of amused triumph; "the gloves will be mine."

"I am afraid those lovely hands will get sunburned, if they are your only dependence," he laughed.

Madame Leandre presented a half-dozen more of her favorites during the evening, endowing each with some rare gift in the same winning exuberance of spirit in which she had introduced Abeille.

Just as the company, which had been gradually thinning, broke up, Fred, who stood in the hall waiting for Mrs. Circester to receive the final embrace of the series of caresses that madame bestowed on her intimates, felt a hand on his arm, and, turning, Abeille stood fumbling in his card-case. Handing him a bit of pasteboard, he said, eagerly:

"I'm enchanted to have met you. There's my card; won't you give me yours? I should like very much to see more of you."

"I want them with six buttons; you can get them only at Stewart's," said the triumphant cynic, who had observed the interchange of cards, and thus explained its meaning, as they walked to the coupé.

"You think that's what it means?" asked Fred, incredulously.

"I don't think anything about it—I know."

When she handed Fred the latch-key to open the door, she said, as she stood on the inside:

"Now you are wondering why, if all these people have axes to grind, I am among them? You needn't deny it—truth is your best *rôle*. It makes you very attractive. You have almost a monopoly of it among men with your advantages. I had determined to tell you something else; some time I will. Good-night—be a good boy," and he heard a soft, musical laugh as the door closed.

CHAPTER VII.

A WOMAN SCORNED.

IT would be impossible, in these sober pages, to attempt to rival the grandiose and pre-Raphaelite phrases in which the society columns set forth the magnificence of the Grimstone ball at Delmanzio's. Balls at that famous *maison* were then not so frequent nor so elaborate as they have since become. But as the great Grimstone house, that now spreads over four lots, fronting the park, was not then built, and as "good form" demanded a return for years of hospitality in New York, the Grimstones decided to pay their social debts in one colossal entertainment. The reader, curious in the exact details of that aristocratic (?) episode, can find the grandeurs of it blazoned, as I said before, in the journals of the day, where he will see that the names alone comprised two long columns, while the description of the raiment adorning the beautiful women present covered a page! Among the names, the curious antiquarian will note the Vice-President and a score of Senators, the most distinguished statesmen of the lower House, and three Governors; the plenipotentiaries of England and France, with three marquises and a duke's son in their suites.

Among the women honored by, or honoring the event, were the wife of the President, Mrs. Ajax, and her beautiful daughter, with the wives of half the Cabinet. One serious omission will be found in the realistic record of the dressing: new to the high life of the metropolis, neither Eleanor nor her mother had taken thought to send a description of their gowns and jewels to the hard-worked writers, who reproduce for the million, after the *fête*, the grandeurs of the proud. It was remarked, however, by those who were present, that Eleanor had subdued her fondness for the lurid hues that signalized her at other assemblages, and made a pronounced impression in a quite simple gown. Mrs. Grimstone stood by her colors, and enjoyed the sensation her youthful maturity created among those who had never seen her. Though the journals declared the guests in rapture with the splendid hospitality of the opulent host, Eleanor secretly pronounced it a dismal affair.

The supper, served from twelve o'clock until four in the morning (there were a score of reprobates found about and under the table at six), specially annoyed her; though we read in the report that "it was an idealized epicureanism that had created the feast, whose component parts had been gathered by a wizard hand from every quarter of the globe," the young lady pronounced it unendurable. What Eleanor found annoying was the prolonged delay of the young men in the supper-room, and a perplexing inability to join the dancers when their hunger was allayed. Bazars of charming dresses were wedged between the thin frames or stout frames of elderly fellows, whose dancing days were over, and whose eyes were not to be dazzled by the ravishing furbelows that mind and money had been devoted to for weeks. Nor could Eleanor induce Herbert to discipline the tipsy brigade that came on his invitation, some of them undergraduates. She would have been wholly miserable if Fred and Hilliard had not helped her out. Hilliard rallied scores from the banquet-room, where the incessant explosions of popping corks denoted serious work of some sort. She repaid her aides with the kindest glances.

"Is it really quite proper for me to dance with you three times in succession, Mr. Hilliard?" she asked, as they moved to the slow, sensuous rise and fall of Strauss's "Wine, Women, and Song." She was quite his own height; her eyes were even with his own as he glanced into them; her lips, intense in color as the heart of the pomegranate, were near his own; her breath inebriated him.

"Anything is proper that you do; you can afford to be a law to yourself," he panted, whether from exertion or emotion is hard to say; then added, in a low tone that he strove to make passionless, "The queen, by her rank, is forced to show preference before a loyal suitor may even lift his eyes."

He felt her body suddenly tremble, and a moment later she begged him to take her from the floor. At first he was shocked at his own saying, which, when he uttered it, had no ulterior meaning beyond the idle gallantry of the instant; but he saw that she construed it sentimentally, and with an imagination which he hadn't given her credit for. He was accustomed to picturesque

improvisations of this sort in ball-room talk, and had never before bethought himself of a literal construction of his *persiflage*. But, whatever was her appreciation of its meaning, Nell showed no further sign of its effect. She resumed her gayety in a moment, and the dance went on. A few minutes later, as Fred sat in the deep recess of one of the windows, Hilliard and Blackdaw, without remarking him, took seats just in front of him. The music was playing softly, and drowned their voices, so that he did not feel that he was a listener. Presently a lady, remarkable even in the lavish magnificence of the scene, was whirled past the spot in the arms of one of the diplomates, just as the last bar of the waltz sounded.

"There's the ruler of our country," Fred heard Hilliard say to Blackdaw, as the lady seated herself a few steps from them.

"What do you mean?" asked Blackdaw, turning to look at the woman.

"That is Mrs. Dominguez las Vedas, the Aspasia of Killgore, the master of the Administration. That woman has more power in Congress than the majority, for she can combine the votes of more than half of the minority and majority, and that's more than any Cabinet minister can do. It is she who has brought about the San Domingo scheme; it is she who got the French arms knavery carried out. It is she who makes the lobby omnipotent. Killgore is madly in love with her, and his wife has gone home to Valedo, and a great scandal is threatened.

Fred looked at the woman attentively. She was not what he would have called beautiful; but he could see by the adoration in the eyes and actions of the marquis seated slightly in front of her, that she must possess some charm, aside from her beauty. She was not so large in figure as Nell, but she had the same predominance of color on cheek and lips. Her eyes were a quick black, scintillant and restless, darting alternating roguishness and tender interest in her adorer of the moment. Her arms and neck were ravishingly bare, but her costume was so perfect, her movements so sensuously agile, her manner so irresistible, that it was the *ensemble* the observer marked—no detail had sufficient prominence to obtrude.

"Do you know her?" asked Blackdaw, suddenly, without removing his eyes from the attractive figure.

"Very well; I might say intimately, only, under the circumstances, that would imply what I do not mean."

"Present me." They sauntered over to where the marquis sat, holding the beauty with an anecdote in the French tongue, which seemed funny, for both were laughing immoderately. The journalists halted a step or two away until she caught sight of them. She inclined her head graciously to Hilliard, and he took it as a sign to approach. She consented with a show of interest to have Blackdaw presented, and made a place for him, by driving the marquis off to get her fan, on the mantel, across the room. The cold face of Blackdaw, Fred could see, was soon in a glow. He was plainly fascinated, and she as plainly was bent on making a deep and lasting impression. As she caught sight of the marquis returning, she arose and, taking Blackdaw's arm, sauntered around the ball-room and out into the hall of reception, where she again seated herself. She was full of resources. She enchanted the young men with the drollest stories of Washington scandal; the rage of the foreign ministers at the free speech of the press, and the free ways of the politicians; of her own battles with the Cabinet ladies for precedence and political preferment. She told how she had secured a foreign ministry for one, a territorial governorship for another, and how she was then bent upon securing the place of Supreme Judge for the "kindest and best of men." She was hardly fairly launched on these memoirs of fragile manners when, espying the marquis, she said, with a look of annoyance:

"Hilliard" (she always called friends of a certain intimacy by their family name), "you made a bad mistake in breaking with Killgore; he is the strongest man in the country, and he'll be President after General Ajax has stepped aside. I'm at the Clarendon —come, both of you, whenever you like; I shall be here a month."

Walking through the crush presently with Herbert, Fred came upon Aspasia again. Herbert stopped as they met:

"Madame Dominguez, you haven't given me a dance, and you know I have your name for one," he said, in mock reproach.

"I'm ready this instant, my child; come."

As they whirled around the room, she said, suddenly:

"That was young Carew you were with, was it not?"

"Yes. Do you know him?"

"No. I saw him dancing with fair Eleanor, and I asked his name. You must present him."

"He won't interest you; he's only a journalist, and jolly green."

"How do you know he won't interest me, Mr. Scapegrace? How do you know but I like green, even when it's jolly? I want to know him. I have use for him."

"Oh, ho! I see—he has a useful pen and the run of the 'Tomahawk.' I hadn't thought of that."

"No; I read that account in the 'Tomahawk,' and I want to know a man that resisted making money through such an old-fashioned and ridiculous scruple as conscience. But, tell me, has he met your father?"

"Yes; he dines at our place quite often. Nell has taken him up."

"You don't mean it! Does he know—does Nell know—the part papa had in the affair?"

"Of course not. Father's name was not mentioned in the article."

"Anything serious in Nell's *penchant?*"

"Of course not; what nonsense—a beggar like that!" and Herbert's eye flashed with noble scorn, as if a cycle of patrician blood boiled at the suggestion of such plebeian *mésalliance.*

"Let me prophesy something to you, my young Duke of Deviltry. I'm the scion of the seventh son of a seventh son, you know; whomsoever Mistress Nell makes up her mind to marry she'll marry. She hasn't got all Aaron Grimstone's blood in her rosy cheeks, and"—she added, as she stopped suddenly, "she'll marry one of two men in this room."

"Well, never mind her; she can take care of herself!" said Herbert, irritably.

"Don't be cross, my child; anger is poor armor for a man of pleasure. Only vulgar people show anger—it's very bad form. There's Carew; go and fetch him."

Herbert moved off sulkily, and asked Fred to go to Aspasia. To his unutterable surprise, that person revealed a deeper shade of his jolly greenness by refusing.

"Why?"

"Simply because I don't care to know her, and she would be equally indifferent about knowing me."

"But if I should tell you that she asked me to present you?"

"I shouldn't believe it."

"Well, then, I tell you that Madame Dominguez las Vedas requests that Mr. Alfred Carew shall be presented to her."

"Then Mr. Alfred Carew declines."

"Good God! you don't mean it. Why, man, that woman can bring the highest dignitary in the United States to her feet. She can control millions of money. A word from her can make your fortune, and a word from her can ruin you!"

"I know something of her power, but I don't imagine she will care enough to say the one word to bring about one or the other; at all events, I don't want to know her." As he spoke, Nell came up, looking at her card.

"I came to apologize for missing the last dance with you. If you'll forgive me, and take this square dance, I shall feel that I have not sinned so much," she said, gayly, as she took his arm. Fred said, in Herbert's ear:

"If she really asked it, this will be your excuse."

"So virtue refuses the palm of vice?" said Aspasia, as Herbert came back alone. "I see an ingenious fib on the end of your tongue, so to speak; you needn't utter it. I saw his manner, and I know he refused to be presented."

"Eleanor carried him off, or he would have come."

"Tut-tut, my child! that's one of the rare secrets of this life you have yet to learn. Never waste a lie—it is too valuable—there is not enough material for artistic lying, and people like you and me should learn to draw sparingly on our capital. Do you know I rather like the simpleton? It's refreshing to know that there is some of that sort left. Heavens! the happiness of a woman that gets a man like that—a man that thinks more of his conscience than money or place!" She took Herbert's arm, and

turned in a direction where she could keep Nell and Fred in view. "No!" she exclaimed, after a long scrutiny, "no! he will never fall in love with Nell, I can see that; if there is a likelihood on either side, Nell will love him, and love him in vain."

Herbert shrugged his shoulders disdainfully. This was trying the patrician blood beyond bounds; he felt that he should say something vindictive if the subject were pursued further. Both had stopped opposite the set in which Nell and Fred were dancing. It ended almost as they came to a halt, and in a moment Hilliard was in Fred's place.

"Ah!" said Aspasia, tightening her hold on Herbert's arm. "there is the man. It requires no prophet to tell that."

"Come, let me take you to the marquis; I'm neglecting my friends," Herbert said, almost savagely, as he fairly dragged the seeress from the spot. She laughed a little musical laugh, like the warble of a bird.

"What does my Lord Grimstone want for his daughter- a prince? In ten years from now that man may be the master of princes, and the woman who marries him a sovereign. Mark the prediction, my son," she said, maliciously, as they came up with the marquis. Mrs. Albion Circester was talking to the nobleman and the three sat down in the rear of the dancers.

"Oh, there's a young man I want to present to you!" exclaimed Mrs. Circester, as she directed Madame Dominguez's glance to Fred, who stood at some distance. The latter, looking around, complained of a draught, and, as the marquis went to draw the curtain, she said:

"My dear, you needn't attempt it. He has already been offered the boon, and refused it."

"What do you mean? You're joking!"

"I'm serious as a congressional joker," and she told the episode in a few jocose words before the marquis resumed his place.

Fred's patron fairly collapsed with horror. She was so visibly shocked that the solicitous nobleman suggested a sip of wine. She asked him to take her to Fred; and, when she had led that unsuspecting innocent into discreet seclusion, she gasped:

"In Heaven's name, what do you mean by such madness?

Why, don't you know"—she went on, as the astonished young man looked at her in bewildered helplessness—"that woman can close the door of every house in New York in your face, and you have affronted her, absolutely insulted her; she will kill you, and you deserve it!"

"Who told you I had refused to be presented?" cried Fred, hot with the conviction of Herbert's treason. "Did Herbert tell her? If he did, he's an unmanly scamp!"

In his excitement he spoke louder than he intended, and Herbert, who had just come within ear-shot, heard the closing words, coupled with his own name.

"You are perfectly justified, Carew, in thinking that, though this is hardly the place to say it. If it were true that I had betrayed your folly, I should be just what you say. I didn't tell her; she stood watching us, for she had sent me expressly to bring you. I knew that you didn't believe that she had, but she assumed that you did, and guessed that you had refused."

Fred looked from the troubled face of Mrs. Circester to the indifferent face of Herbert, and then, in the conviction that he was wronging Herbert, exclaimed, impulsively:

"Forgive me, Herbert. I jumped to the conclusion, and you can see that, since but we two knew what was said, I was justified, wasn't I?"

"Yes, you were, but you're an impracticable fellow, and you'll find your road a pretty rough one if you keep on in this way. Of course, I bear no ill-will, and the matter is ended." He left them composedly, and Mrs. Circester, bidding Fred sit down, asked, in piteous incredulity: "What does it mean? You couldn't have been in your senses. I am quite dazed; I never heard of such a thing!"

"It's simple enough. This lady is—" Fred hesitated, and colored, evidently conscious for the first time that the ground of his objection to knowing Madame Dominguez couldn't be explained to a lady.

"I know all that, everybody knows all that; but do you suppose society is an evangelizing mission? So long as she behaves herself irreproachably in a drawing-room, and rumor alone takes

note of her private life, what has society to do with her conduct? Do you imagine that there are not scores like her in this city, in this room? You amaze me! Where have you lived; where are your eyes; where that keen observation of the journalist? On the same score that you decline knowing this lady, you would shut yourself from some of the most brilliant drawing-rooms of this city."

"I can't believe it, I won't believe it. You are deceived by the vulgar reports in black-mailing papers."

"When I tell you that I know of my own knowledge a dozen women courted and considered in the most pretentious places one visits in this city, who are all that you can imagine Madame Dominguez to be, you can hardly hold that I am talking hearsay. But this is all wide of the question. I am really interested in you, I like you—I like you very much—and it is because I respect you that I like you. Now, what I propose is this: you must let me make your peace with this justly offended lady; for, remember, in any event, if she had a brother or husband, you as a man of honor couldn't refuse a challenge for such an affront. It isn't your business to keep the world's conscience; all you have to do is to meet people on the terms the world accords them, and ask no questions."

"I ask no questions—I say nothing of this woman; surely I have a right to say whom I shall and whom I will not know," cried Fred.

"By no means; you have committed a rudeness as well as an unpardonable offense, and I don't know but the *gaucherie* is as bad as the offense. As the guest of the Grimstones you have no right to refuse to meet any one you find under their roof. You insult them as well as the lady by your conduct. All that is left for you now is humble apology to Herbert, and to adopt a conciliatory course toward La Dominguez, which will clear her mind of this dreadful *faux pas*. Let me manage: we're very good friends, and I can convince her that you meant nothing. She can be made to believe that it was the diffidence of a young man unaccustomed to such dazzling beings as she is: that will be sure to flatter her."

"You're wonderfully kind to take so much interest in me, Mrs.

Circester, and I am grateful, on my soul I am; but I know I am right, I know that I should be doing wrong to do what you suggest—I beg you not to think of the matter again. If I have incurred the malignity of the woman that I can not honor, I can bear it rather than blush when I meet my mother's eye, with the burden of this woman's tainted patronage in my mind."

"You are a headstrong and dangerous fellow," said the discomfited Mentor, sighing, and rising to go, while she regarded him queerly and scrutinizingly, "I don't take this for an answer, and I shall tell my friend that it was *mauvaise honte* that overcame you. Good-night." But as she rode home she secretly admired the foolish obstinacy of the young Puritan, as she called him thereafter, and she wondered in a lazy way if her boy would ever let the vague sentiment of home teaching stand between him and fortune visibly beckoning toward its most coveted prizes.

Meeting Rivers a few minutes after, Fred went with him to take leave of Eleanor and Mrs. Grimstone. He observed closely to see if they knew anything of the affair, but their cordial tone made his mind easy.

As they walked across Madison Square, Fred told Rivers the adventure, and asked him if he had not acted right. Rivers roared until Fred feared the burly policeman behind would arrest them for desecrating with plebeian noise the solemn peace of this court quarter. When the other had recovered his gravity, which was even then but a truce, as he continued to explode as he talked, Rivers said:

"My wingless cherub! of course you're wrong, madly, wildly, maniacally wrong. You've no more right to regulate the morals of Grimstone's guests, or know that they have morals, or haven't morals, than you have to know that you are sharing a pew with an atheist in church, or the seat with an alderman in the theatre or the street-car! Society regulates collectively the morals of its members. Individual judgment is as useless and illegitimate to affect an issue as the vote of a minority in an election. But let me bring the matter home to you: until the other day, half the people who knew you believed that you had been exposed in taking a bribe. Suppose that some one at Grimstone's had, on the

strength of the common belief, declined your acquaintance. The fact that you were innocent doesn't enter into the matter. Grimstone would have been compelled to refuse you further admittance to his house, or deprive himself of the pleasure of receiving the persons objecting to you. No, my boy, you ought to have met the lady, and cut her afterward, if you objected to knowing her. You have done an elephantine folly, and I'm sorely afraid you'll pay dearly for the right of showing a pretty women that you place virtue above beauty. That's a thing no pretty woman ever forgives."

"Well, you haven't given me any valid reason yet that I can see as such," says Obstinacy, staring upward at the stars.

"If you knew the woman as I do, you'd require no reasoning, my son."

"Who is she? I know that she is Senator Killgore's intimate, and that's all."

"Her story is a romance. She came to this country from the West Indies, Barbadoes, in 1863, I think. She was then, though a girl of seventeen, the wife of an English army officer. He was at first an *attaché* of the British legation in Washington, but later went on a mission to Richmond, caught yellow fever in Charleston, where he had gone to see about blockade-running, and died within a week. The wife remained in Washington, and did not learn for months that her husband was dead. She wasn't heartbroken. He was the younger son of an earl, and had a very small allowance from his brother. The news of his death came from this brother, who curtly informed her that, beyond the sum necessary to take her back to Barbadoes, she could expect no further aid or recognition from him; that, if she had a son, he would adopt him, but only on condition that she executed a paper at the legation, relinquishing maternal right or title in his government or rearing. In that event he would settle one hundred and fifty guineas a year upon her until she married again. She had a boy three months old, but the earl's letter so enraged her that she never answered it. At the legation she met the Marquis Dominguez las Vedas, a rich grandee who was interested in mines in Mexico, who passed his winters in Washington, and disappeared no one

knew where in summer. When the year of her widowhood was over, she married the marquis, and put her boy in the college at Georgetown. The couple lived for years in Washington; the marquis, who talked English badly, making use of his wife in lobbying schemes, looking to aggression of some sort in St. Domingo, in which he had large plantations. How successful she was in those you may remember; the island would have been bought by the ring of which Killgore was the real head if such an outcry had not been raised by the newspapers after the bargain was concluded.

"After that they came to New York, where their title gave them the highest standing. They lived for some time in great affluence at one of the fashionable hotels, and became as well known as the oldest families. The marquis, who was a *gourmet*, was suddenly stricken with paralsyis and softening of the brain. He was sent to an asylum, where he has been ever since, unless he is dead. The wife then returned to Washington, where she became the Egeria of Killgore. Her passion for intrigue was probably as much the motive of the *liaison* at first as anything else. Killgore had seen her craft in dozens of schemes, and he became her slave. Once he attempted to deceive her, and she taught him a lesson that has kept him constant, if not faithful, ever since. Young Talboy had just brought his wife to Washington; she was the daughter of Governor Fleece, one of the Continental families. Talboy was an assistant secretary in one of the departments, and used to take his wife to the office every afternoon. Killgore had a great deal of business in that department, and used to meet Mrs. Talboy whenever he went. He fell madly in love with her, and went to every reception and public place she visited; he neglected la marquise openly. She took her measures, set a watch on his movements, and learned who her rival was. She waited her time, and, when the blow was ready, struck. One day a messenger ran into Talboy's office, and informed him that his wife, who had complained of ailing, was dangerously ill, and that a *coupé* was at the door to take him home. He ran down, jumped in, and drove straight home, rushed to the sick-room, and found Killgore there! The scandal was pretty closely

kept. Talboy is ambitious, and preferred the influence of Killgore to blood or vengeance. He is living peacefully with his wife, and Killgore plays his mistress no more treasons. Now, that is the sort of woman you have made a relentless enemy. You can draw your own inferences as to the policy of what you have done, leaving the question of right or wrong out of consideration."

"It's a horrible story, and she's worse than I thought; and I'm heartily glad I acted as I did."

"That's the Irish in you, my son—pig-headed in right as well as wrong. The Celt has a bad name in this country, and you might just as well enjoy the game as the name. You'll get no credit for right-doing; you're like a suspected woman—you may be pure as snow, but no one will believe you."

"But I shall believe myself, and that's a good deal, I am beginning to think"—and the two friends separated, the loud voice of Rivers breaking into roars of laughter until he turned the corner of the square.

CHAPTER VIII.

LESSONS IN HIGH LIFE.

ON opening the newspapers the day after the ball ("all of which I saw, and part of which I was," Fred said to himself, in jocose paraphrase), he was not less amazed than the observant apostle to learn the importance and the magnitude of the festivity. It required from three to six columns of the smallest type to set forth its splendors. Even the "Tomahawk" gave a column and a half of its precious pages to a sardonic sketch of the spirit of the scene set forth in the tone of good-humored raillery, that made its commentaries the most effective satire of the times.

"By George!" Fred exclaimed, as he opened each of the journals in turn, "I had no idea I was taking part in such a momentous event. I should have reported the affair in ten lines, and then considered I had wasted space on a thing so trivial. But obviously I am mistaken, for here are a dozen lines

in each of the papers, to describe a fight with the Indians, where a hundred men were killed; a dozen lines about the Scientific Convention, attended by all the learned men in this country, and some from abroad; five lines, to tell of the mass-meeting in favor of purifying politics; a half-column, to tell the objects of a working-man's convention in Columbus; a third of a column, describing the uprising of harassed settlers in California, demanding redress from the courts against the monopolists destroying land and crops by an inundation of slag; half a dozen lines, announcing an electrical mechanism that will enable telegraph companies to send four messages over one wire simultaneously; a mere mention of a new book by Emerson; a 'personal' to tell that the Woman's Suffrage Association met in Washington.

"By Heaven! I can't understand it. Here is matter, rivaling the data of an encyclopædia, dismissed in a column or two, while a frivolous gathering of a few hundred idle people is emblazoned in pages. Here is a country of forty-five millions of people, forty-four millions of whom are incessantly at work producing such things as make the marvels of the Arabian Nights commonplace, and the history of the day dismisses them in a few lines, while the dancing and feeding of a few hundred of them take up more space than an essay of Bacon, or the whole of Johnson's 'Lives of the Poets.' What can it mean? Am I mad; or is this the real mission of the press? Who reads such stuff? Obviously it must be read, or such sharp people as the publishers would not waste their space with it."

Meeting Rivers at breakfast, he propounded this sociological problem to that philosopher, demanding the *rationale* of it. Rivers laughed—he loved laughing, you see, this kindly cynic.

"It's money, my son; big money for the publishers. How? You ought, by this time, to know. First, every one, or nearly every one whose name is printed, buys from fifty to a hundred copies; people who have wide social relations buy as high as a thousand copies. I have known demands for issues like this morning's to continue for years after the event. That, of course, means money, for the papers are sold at retail rate over the counter. Then, again, you will observe that every dress described is traced

to the firm that sold the material; the *modiste* that constructed it, the artist who designed it, the jeweler that crowned it with the gems matching its colors and character.

"Then, if you will turn to the advertising columns, you will remark that the amount and enthusiasm expended on each of these are in proportion to the space taken up by the firm's advertisements. In many cases, the paragraphs, describing the fineries, decorations, and the like, which make the reader wonder at the universality of journalistic information, are furnished by the firms, most of whom now keep writers engaged for such work alone. This is all paid for at so much a line, generally not less than a dollar. Where this is not the rule, that is, where the text is not supplied by the jeweler, the merchant, or the *modiste*, the ladies themselves call in adepts and send the paragraph describing their houses, dresses, and parties, to each office.

"There is, I'll venture to say, not a line in all these reports, except in rare instances, that is not paid for, directly or indirectly, three or four times over. Nearly every line of the matter has been in type in the various newspaper offices for days, and in many cases proofs have been submitted to those paying most largely. Even the reporters receive *douceurs*, such of them as will accept them!"

"But why publish all the names? I see yours and mine, for example. We don't order copies."

"No, but these lists are of value to the retail trade; for the next month you will receive circulars daily—that makes a demand for the journal; and it is safe to estimate that the extra issues printed to-day will reach thousands of copies, all clear profit to the publishers. I have only hinted at some of the interpenetrations by which this golden chain takes in all the money-yielding factors of a rich community like New York. Remark the amount of advertising this morning: there are three columns on pages where generally you find but one. These are inserted at greatly advanced rates. It all means money—money, my boy! Everything means money to-day. Do you remark the modest line in each report, that there were over one hundred millions represented by Grimstone and four of his guests?"

"Yes, I wondered at that; why was such a vulgar thing printed

in all the reports? How could it be known, even if it were true; and of what pertinence is it, if it be true?"

"The point was unquestionably given out by Grimstone's authority, through some adroit lictor of the house. Money is the fascination of gatherings like this, where in old times it was good feeling and neighborly interest.

"The newspapers are merely taking advantage of their market in 'pandering,' as you call it, to this diseased demand. They print these columns, that shock you, as a purely business outlay, and on the whole it is justifiable, for it helps scatter a moiety of ill-got millions, in a handsome percentage, among all sorts of craftsmen, from florists and hackmen to writers and artists; for what is only told in the dailies will be illustrated in the weeklies, and then the photographers will come in for a share in the golden shower. So in a sense, you see, Grimstone is a public benefactor in this instance; he not only spends his own money, but causes thousands of other dollars to be put in circulation. *Hæc fabula docet*—put money in thy purse, my son, if you would win beauty, wear laurels, or have consideration in any manner whatsoever.

"I suppose people were always the same, but I think the sordid side of humanity was never shown in such frank unloveliness as in the society and life of this day. Now let me instill the essence of all this wisdom into your mind, my impetuous Loyola; there let it crystallize as dew into diamonds. Journalism offers the widest scope for men of brains. Write books? No one will read them, unless you have *claqueurs* in the press, or a sympathizing *coterie* in the monthlies. I know a novel, written by the brightest mind in New York, and, because the author would not descend to the literary artifices that pique curiosity, it lies on the shelves of the fashionable publisher in Pirate Row, unread, these five years. Write for the monthlies? They are nepotic groups into which a new-comer can no more penetrate than a monk into masonry. No, my son, don't look too seriously at the worldly phases of journalism. Don't mind them plying the cap and bells to the rich. They do it cynically, and enjoy satirizing, where they seem to adulate. They are the Swifts of the social Yahoos, the Cervantes of

the social chivalry, the Voltaires to *écraser* the *infame* of political and social superstition."

"A prodigious *rôle*, truly!" laughed Fred.

"Yes, there's no sentiment in these flamboyant reproductions of parvenu ostentation. If it didn't pay, such routs would be dismissed in a paragraph. The lesson of it all is—put money in thy purse—honestly, of course, if you can, some other way if you must!"

"Yet you are a poor man. At your age, and gifted with all this worldly knowledge, your practice doesn't consist with your advice."

"Oh, I'm too old to get over the superstitions of my youth. I don't know how it might be if I were as young as you are. Furthermore, when I was a youngster, money was a mere incident in the lives of most young men. It didn't bring the finest girls in marriage, the homage of place, or the consideration of mind. If I were young as you are, I don't know but I should regard the teachings of my youth as abstractions, and be what everybody about me seems to be, and is not ashamed of being. However, you must wait till you marry before you decide on joining Belial. A wife of the right kind is a perfect Solomon in matters of this sort, and one beauty about women is that, however frivolous, however misdirected, in the secondary objects of life, none of them care to be won by confessed money-getters, who crave money for itself. For I've never known it to fail that the passion for money-getting claims an undivided allegiance. Therefore, though women like what money brings, they rarely like the money-makers. Then, too, just as literary women detest literary men, and marry clods, rich women turn to sentimental beggars like you. I shall not be surprised to see you leading Miss Van Staten to the altar one of these days. When that bonanza time comes, don't forget this Rivers of the waters of life!" and, with this joke, he wound up the homily.

During the afternoon Fred received a visit from Abeille. The young man asked him at once about the great event of the evening before; he had seen Fred's name in the list of guests, and his manner was now as deferentially winning as before it had been

confiding and gracious. He envied his luck, but did not wonder at it, for merit and parts like Fred's were sure to hold their own even against such odds as money. Then he led the conversation adroitly to his *protégée*, epilogued vaguely on the indifference of managers, the inappreciation of the critics, and the glory of men who identified themselves with rising genius.

Miss Hermit was such a one. Her voice had been pronounced perfect by Nilsson; she had carried all the prizes in the Conservatoire. She only needed an opportunity to become famous. "Now, I will say frankly that I want your help," he continued, softly. "You can make her career by a slight effort, or you can let the poor thing struggle on, unheard and unrecognized."

"I don't in the least see how I can help or hurt Miss Hermit. I'm sure, if she has the voice and training you say, she is independent of the individual, and may appeal confidently to the public."

"Ah, yes, that's just it! Don't you know that a Grisi or Piccolomini might come to New York, unknown, and sing to empty benches, if the press did not take her up? Now, here is what you can do. You know all the writers on the press. Ask them to come to a *début* we are going to give presently. They will refuse, of course, but we are going to have a little banquet, after the concert, at Delmanzio's. The money has been raised. Of course, many of the writers are poorly paid; they naturally can't be asked to give their time and work for nothing. Now, here is what I propose. A few good preliminary notices in each paper will assure us a good house. We can count on fifteen hundred dollars above expenses. Now, I will put one thousand dollars of that in your hands to do with as you like, knowing that you are too much of a gentleman to bring odium on us by neglecting to divide it with your *confrères;* but of course you will be justly entitled to a larger sum than the others. You are shocked at the idea?"

"I confess I think it a very unworthy way to begin such a career as you prophesy for this lady, to say nothing of what I think of your—let us say courage, in counting on my support in such equivocal methods."

"Pray don't misunderstand me. It is a pure matter of business. It is done every day. I came to you simply because I had the pleasure of knowing you through our mutual friend Madame Leandre, who felt confident that you would not refuse to aid a girl so worthy and so friendless as Miss Hermit. We are willing and glad to devote the gains of the *début* to those who help us; it is a common practice—indeed, it is the only way in which an unknown singer has ever won her way in this country."

"Very well, Mr. Abeille, you seem to me far too fine a fellow to be part of this ignoble way of doing things. I will help Miss Hermit so far as I can. I will speak to all the fellows I know, but you must never breathe money to me, or I shall avoid you and her as I avoid a plague."

"Ah! Mr. Carew, I wish all the men in your profession were of the same mold: the stage wouldn't be the mockery it is to-day!"

"You may be sure that the majority of the men in my profession would act just as I do; the few who disgrace it by bribery can be counted on the fingers of your hand."

"I wish I could believe it," sighed the gratified amateur, as he bowed himself out, protesting his delight to have "such a rock of rectitude in a man already known for his brilliancy."

Fred sat down with a sickening sensation of disgust and despair. Of what avail were effort and conscience, if this were the reckoning in which his adored life-work was summed up? Better, far better, a carpenter's bench, a blacksmith's forge, or the tranquil labors of the field, "far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife." But he would not believe it. He would try the fellows, and see if they didn't respond as heartily, with motives as high-minded as his own! On his way to the "Tomahawk" he stopped at the office of a very brilliant and able writer, whose dramatic critiques were the delight of the town. Fred explained the situation in a few words, the other nodding encouragingly as the project was laid bare.

"Yes, I've heard of her; she's the *protégée* of Miss St. Ogg, our greatest singer, and, as things go, her word alone would crowd the house, but it won't. Who is running the affair?"

"How running? I don't understand you, Mr. Hagar."

"I mean who handles the money, pays the bills; opera houses and incidentals are not thrown in, even for fine voices and fine eyes. Before I commit myself, I must know that there is an assured backer; I have known these affairs to fizzle out the very hour announced for the performance?"

"I believe Mr. Abeille is managing the concert," and Fred's face flushed and his heart beat.

"Ah! yes, I know of him—a smart fellow." He mused a moment, and then said, with an air of magnanimous conversion to a sentiment: "Well, say to him he may come and see me. I can't tell what to do until I learn what he proposes."

He looked carelessly at Fred as he said this, but the latter, taking the words literally, rose to go, thanking him for his good-nature, and assuring him that it was "just what he expected." Hagar's eyes rested on him as he closed the door, and an amused smile stole over his face.

"Is he green or greedy? I will soon see."

That evening Fred was enabled to inform Abeille that he had secured promises from all the men he knew, and inclosed their addresses, where Abeille was to visit them, and himself explain his purposes and what he desired. He wrote in the coldest tone, swelling with the sense of Abeille's humiliation, when he found that what he had regarded as conditional on money Fred had secured without such a thing even being hinted! Had he been gifted with an eye observant enough to read human emotion, and had he been near enough to bring it to bear upon Abeille when that diplomate read his note, Fred would have felt less complacent triumph in the virtue of his friends. The amateur whistled softly, looked lugubriously at the sheet of estimates, and muttered:

"Hagar, of all men! This means big money; and, the worst of all, in advance. I know what that curt 'call and see me' involves!"

An hour or two later, Mrs. Albion Circester received a packet and note, as she was seated with la marquise, that created quite a contrary effect:

DEAR MRS. CIRCESTER: You've won the gloves. I've lost an illusion. I shouldn't regret it if there had not been a heavy run on my stock of late. They remained too long with me, however, to leave a place congenial to infidelity. I will put charity in their stead, and, like the good St. Augustine believe, where I can not prove. Men are, at best, as at worst, perverse. The conscience of Loyola brought about as much bloodshed as the greed of Alva; but the one thought he was serving his race, and the other knew he was corrupting it. I refuse to believe that women are not an inspiration to manliness, and men less guided by their better impulses than they ever were, because I find some women that are not pure, and some men that are not good. I shall persist in believing refinement a flower of the heart. I had hoped to console you for losing your wager with a sonnet on faith; but, as you have won it, accept this sermon as an expression of the conviction that, while on your hands, these gloves, though a *souvenir* of your cynicism, will never be clasped by one more unworthy than

Your grateful and sincere friend,

ALFRED CAREW.

"What an extraordinary young fool it is!" cried Madame Dominguez, as Mrs. Circester, having first read the note, handed it to her. "He writes like a college boy, just introduced to the maunderings of Kant. I expected the true, the good, and the beautiful in every phrase. He must be a poet, a madman, or both."

"He's certainly a poet," murmured Mrs. Circester, dreamily, her eyes vaguely wandering upward, with a far-away look.

"Do you believe him—that is, do you think he knows what he means? If I didn't know something of him, I'm sure I couldn't tell what he meant by that fantastic note."

"Believe? Of course, I believe; there was a time"—and she opened the gloves and contrasted them with the azure in the veins of her dainty hands—"there was a time when I felt just as he says—when I believed in women and trusted men."

"But you've been married since, my dear; no illusion after that!" and the marquise laughed in a gay, bantering way, that

brought a flush to the other's cheeks. "However, we will not go back to odious things. I mean to test this paragon of yours. I've yet to meet the creature, in male form, that can carry resistance beyond fine words."

"My dear, you're not going to mind the silly act of the other night? Believe me, if you knew him, you would forgive him; yes, you would like him the better for it. Remember, he's a mere boy, and probably grew up at his mother's apron-strings; and his head is still full of the absurdities country mothers teach their boys."

"*Tiens—tiens, quelle idée*—give me another cigarette—one needs brain stimulant in talking to you, '*absolutemente*,' as my afflicted lord marquis says, when he has nothing else to say; you make me feel like a Borgia or Brinvilliers, with poison in my finger-nails, to scratch an enemy to death, or ointment in my hair to drug those who are *de trop*. I tell you that I am really interested in this phenomenon, and, so far from meaning him harm, I am bent on setting him up as a rival to that fatuous donkey Hilliard. The poet is not so *distingué* as the *prosateur*; but he's not bad looking, and if you, or some one who understands things, could keep him in hand for a season or two, he'd make a *succès fou*, marry a million, and keep it in circulation, which is more than that selfish beggar Hilliard will do, when he divides old man Grimstone."

"Do you really think he'll get Eleanor?"

"Get her! why, the idiot fairly invited him the other night at the ball—she couldn't keep her eyes from him; he'll get her if he wants her; but he don't want her if he can get a girl with the same amount of money plus fine manners, securer social relations, and a better pedigree. He winces every time he comes near Mother Grimstone; her flamboyant laces and flame-colored *bijoux* reminded him of the lurid illustrations of the martyrs in Fox's thrilling narrative. I could read it as plainly in his furtive eye as I could his equable sentiment for Miss Nellie."

"But I suspect Nell cares for Carew; they are much together, and she has been strangely kind and interested in him?"

"He's what the French call a *chandelle* for her just at this

time. Grimstone is bent on marrying her to Dorr, and she loathes him, as she well may; for, to say nothing of a left-handed wife and a family of children already, he's not an attractive sort of a person to choose when one is young and rich. One thing, Grimstone, with all his astuteness, don't count on. Nell is capable of killing herself before she consents to the match."

"But why on earth does Grimstone want it? He is set down as worth anywhere from ten to twenty millions; I shouldn't be surprised if it were nearer fifty."

"I know it is nearer fifty. In one job with Killgore they cleared, or he cleared, over five millions, or will when they have perfected some missing links. As to the marriage, he has that curious passion of men who get in love with money. He wants to round his millions out and make the sum so colossal that he can bear down rivalry by the mere weight of his wealth. He is, by-the-way, one of the most extraordinary men in the country, and Killgore says that, if he ever takes the notion to go into politics, he will make himself President for life, or declare a monarchy, so domineering is his nature. His interest in politics so far has only been shown in giving money to get the right sort of men elected. No one ever knows what ticket he votes, or whether he votes at all."

"As his family are from Kentucky, he probably is an Ultrocrat. I know Herbert is."

"His family or relations wouldn't make any difference with him; besides, he's a Vermont man—his father was a tailor at Bennington. The sign is said to be there still. Mark my words!" added madame, rising, "you'll hear queer things from that family one of these days. Unless Herbert takes a sharp turn, he'll not perpetuate the old man's fortune; and as for Nell, it's an open question whether she cuts her throat or marries her coachman. One of the family made away with himself; and where the trick is once tried it often proves catching," and as she uttered the last feeling sentiment la marquise put out her cheek in the French fashion to receive the perfunctory salute of her hostess.

As she drove off, she murmured, smiling to herself: "She's *rusé*, is my dear Adeline; she thinks of throwing over the count

and taking this young Saint Anthony to her arms. Can it be true? Could she be such a fool at her age? With her expensive tastes, and his poverty, 'twould be a pretty romance. I must all the more be the good fairy of this youth, and crown the idyl with a shower of gold. And yet they call me a revengeful, wicked woman. The world is so full of sinners that a saint isn't recognized when she comes among the unregenerate," and she laughed softly at her own grotesque conceit."

"I believe Dominguez is in love with Carew," and, full of the conviction, Mrs. Circester stood before the mirror, studying the mature charms that refused to admit age, wear or tear, or any other sign that they were not the flower of youth and easy conscience. "What can she want of him; why should she want him presented to her? She knows he is poor, and she knows now that he won't intrigue, and has nothing of the libertine—what test does she mean to put him to? Good heavens!" and she left the room and ran up to her boudoir, and seated herself to write. But she seemed out of a writing vein, or found composing less facile than talking; finally, however, with evident reluctance, she read over and sealed the sheets she had written, and addressing the envelope to Mr. Alfred Carew, University Building, sent her maid with it, directing her to make haste. When the girl was gone, she entered her dressing-room, and presently reappeared in a dazzling loose robe of soft ermine-like fabric, falling in a sweep to the floor, and displaying, as she walked, two ravishing slippered feet, that might have been placed on the pedestal of Toledo for the worship of the devout—that is, if the devout were males!

She carefully smoothed the rosettes at the fastenings, studied the effect of the drapery reclining on a wide divan; then rising, went before the mirror, and, removing the combs and pins from her hair, let it fall in naiad-like tresses over her shining shoulders. This, too, she studied in many bewitching coilings and twistings, leaning her head on the side of the mirror to catch each effect. Then she examined her hands, went into the inner room, and, pouring a liquid of delicious perfume from a large flagon, bathed the upper part of her face and hands; then taking a crystal vase filled with a pinkish pomade, dipped a brush into the substance, and, inserting

it under the nail of each finger until quite satisfied with the result, replaced it, and applied another ingredient to the upper part of the cheeks. She smiled with justifiable complacency, as she bent close to the mirror to test the efficacy and at the same time the invisibility of the borrowed details.

"I never looked younger; there isn't a girl in New York with a fresher complexion," she said to herself. "I believe I shall never grow old," and she stood quite transfigured with an exultant sense of her beauty and its imperishability. "I shall never let myself grow old—what a fool I should be after all the enjoyment my beauty has given me! It has put me above women with millions; it has given me as much as money can give, and I'll stick to it—won't I, dear?" and she caressed herself fondly, smiling the while at the lovely face the mirror made to smile back at her.

"I wonder if he'll come? It's such a strange being; he is capable of sending back word that his business keeps him." Then she fixed herself in a new pose, her hands hanging down, and the fingers lightly interlaced behind her. But the mirror told the same story—radiant beauty, sensuous grace, and enchanting contour. "Ah! if the silly boy only knew that a prince would have given his rank, his name, for the privilege that is offered him unasked! Dominguez can't compare with me, though she's younger. Ah me, if I only had money! If I could only find the right hand to work my plans, I could be rich, and free, and always beautiful, always beautiful. Why can't I be as clever as Dominguez? Why? She can help me to money! How is it that I never thought of that? Ah! I know very well: who cares to owe anything to a woman? How do I know the minute she may be an enemy? She will hardly venture to be an open one!" and the beauty in the glass laughed until ever so many exquisite teeth shone out between the rose-leaves that seemed lips. "She'd fare poorly if I found it my part to warn our set against her; though I don't know many in our set that would fare much better, if the world were made up of such St. Sebastians as this ridiculous Carew boy!"

She started, still looking over her shoulder at the face in the mirror; the door, outside, had opened and closed, she heard a

quick, noisy step, and pulling a low embroidered screen to the head of the divan, she placed herself negligently in an attitude, half reclining, half sitting. "Walter!" she called, tenderness and inquiry in the accent. "Yes; it's I!" A slim, willowy figure appeared in the door, and answered the appeal of the extended arms by going to the couch and bending down to let himself be kissed.

The handsome face, soft eyes, and repose of manner, revealed the relationship, not less than the good-humored restiveness with which, boy-like, he endured the maternal caresses, as, drawing his head toward her, the mother stroked his hair away from the forehead, touched her lips lingeringly to his eyes, his brow, and mouth. He broke away as the process seemed on the point of beginning again, and the mother laughed softly as she thought that boys of this youth's age kissed and were kissed by feminine relations with such reluctance; though she had remarked that, when the tie of kinship had decreased to cousin-kin, the most obstinate boys found it less irksome, or less subversive of the dignity that sits with such weight of responsibility upon the lad between seventeen and twenty-three. The maternal tribute paid, Walter bestowed himself discontentedly in a chair by the window. Neither spoke for some time, the mother lost in reveries that carried her far from her son.

"I say, mother, am I to have anything extra this month? You know I have spent all my money already. I am behind in the boat-fund, in the polo club, and in the dancing-class."

"Ah, my boy, my extravagant child! where am I to get money to keep you going? Your bills were three hundred dollars last month; I don't see where I'm to get money to live, if these expenses are absolutely needful; and I suppose they are, or you wouldn't make them. I must devise a way of making money. I can't starve along on a miserable five thousand a year any longer; now that you're becoming a young man you must be able to hold your head with the fellows of your rank; I know that, I see it. To do anything else would throw you out of sight, and you might as well be a tailor's or a carpenter's son, if you can't keep in with the families that were your father's friends and are mine."

The boy, who was swinging the heavy tassel of the window-shade, left off suddenly, and, slipping over to the couch, took one of her shapely hands and kissed it caressingly. Then, as if encouraged by the liberal sentiment just uttered, he cleared his throat, and said, a little timidly:

"You know, *Mütterchen*, that the fellows are getting up a fund for a class-yacht; I am one of the crew, and I can't stay in the club unless I pay my share."

He hesitated, got up, and walked on the narrow edge of the Turkey rug, keeping his feet on the outer line of arabesque, like a Moslem performing the rubric of the holy carpet. His mother watched, waiting to hear the amount demanded, but he seemed to have given his mind quite up to this dilatory manœuvre?

"Well, *Hertzchen*, and how much is this pillage to be?"

"I don't think you ought to talk like that, mother. I'm sure it's pretty hard lines for me. You want me to go with none but the swell fellows; I'm sure I'd just as soon be with the others. They have a good deal more fun, and don't spend half as much money. But you complain when I go to the Bowery—where a fellow can pass a whole evening, and be as jolly as you please on beer and *Schweitzer-käse*, and the whole shot isn't five dollars."

"O Walter, don't talk of those horrid places! I'd rather sell my diamonds than have you forced into such haunts. It breaks my heart to hear you say there is any pleasure in them for you. Ugh! Horrid socialists and communists; it would be your ruin. No, you shall have all the money you need. How much do you want for the yacht-fund?"

"Well, the amount now is five hundred dollars; and, perhaps, if we win, there will be no more; if we don't, there will be another five hundred called for."

"Heavens, Walter! how can we stand it? I shall have to give up this apartment and go into the country."

"Oh, well, don't let us talk of the affair any more. I will drop the last year, and go into uncle's office."

"My son, you know I won't hear of such a thing. You must finish your college course, graduate high, and go into uncle's office with *éclat*. Give me my check-book."

She wrote out the check and handed it to him; he kissed her passionately, whispering endearing diminutives expressive of the goodness of his adored little mother, and, with the trophy in his pocket, hurried away. She rose and examined in the mirror the havoc made by her boy's embraces, readjusted her hair, studied her changing expressions, then, with a sigh, half-triumphant, half-disconsolate, resumed her *odalisque* attitude on the couch. "Dear fellow!" she murmured, holding her hands up where the light shone through the transparent fingers. "He shall not be humiliated before his comrades! But it's curious, too, he's only four years younger than Carew, who has been earning handsome wages for years. I wonder how it is?" she asked herself in languid surprise. "None of the college fellows that I know ever earn anything; or, if they do, it is not before thirty! How do such people as Carew get an education, when they begin their career so young?"

Presently her maid returned, saying that Mr. Carew wasn't in his rooms, but was expected at six o'clock, and she had left the note.

"Very well, my good Lucie; have dinner delayed until half-past seven, and set the table for three. Go to the florist's and get some flowers. We'll drink Burgundy to-night, my imported *cru*—you understand?"

"Oui, madame."

CHAPTER IX.

CLODIUS CAPTURES THE BONA DEA.

SINCE the Grimstone ball, Fred's letters had become numerous and edifying. Scores of people, many of whom he had never seen or known, wrote to congratulate him on his noble conduct, and the triumphant vindication he had received. Shopkeepers wrote him of their readiness to supply him at the lowest rate—percentage off for journalists—everything conceivable from a patent horse-brush to a miraculous pomade. With these came circulars requesting as a deep favor his personal inspection of

imported stock, crowned with the seal of highest fashion abroad, and recognized as "tony," "nobby," and indispensable to a man moving in the distinguished and fastidious circles in which his name was found.

The editor of a weekly fashion journal informed him, in the most flattering terms, that, if he were not already in the employ of a rival in making use of his enviable opportunities, an engagement would be offered him at once on the most advantageous terms. It was among a heap of these reminders of the worldliness of his fellow-men that he found the note from Mrs. Albion Circester:

"THE 'CASTLEMARRE,' *Friday.*

"DEAR MR. CAREW: Your *lovely* note is *so* like you; while I *don't* believe in *all* men, I believe in *you*. I won't say what *else* I think, but I will tell you when you *come*. Come and dine with Walter and myself this evening, '*toute en famille*,' you see. I want particularly to *see* you, as I have something *very* important to *tell* you, which I can not write. I shall *expect* you, and dinner will not be served until you come.

"Your attached friend,

"ADELINE CIRCESTER.

"MR. ALFRED CAREW."

Herbert's supper was set for that night, and Fred had counted on working until late. But the invitation could not be put off. He was dressed and in the lady's bower before the clock struck seven. He found her in the boudoir, even more radiant under the dim splendors of the crimson-shrouded candelabra set on the mantel above her, and the lights in the chandelier turned low. She did not rise when he entered, but, stretching out her hand, revealing whiteness, plumpness, and beauty above the elbow, said, in a caressing apology:

"I'm quite worn out with worry and fatigue. I know you'll excuse my *déshabille*, but I didn't feel equal to dressing, and I couldn't postpone a talk with you to-night. Bring that ottoman and sit there," she said, as Fred sank down so that his head was on a level with her own as she lay propped up by the tapestried pillows. "Now I can talk." But she seemed in no hurry to

begin, and the young man sat looking a little surprised and constrained. His eye fell on the slender hand lying invitingly near him, and almost unconsciously he took it in his own, quite as he would have taken any perfect object lying within his reach. She made no pretense of reluctance, nor did she misunderstand the guileless lad's ignorance in the act. But it gratified her, and she watched in languorous enjoyment as he held it up where the light showed the crimson color through the white texture.

"I'm going to talk to you about yourself."

"That ought to be an agreeable theme if Byron is right, as he says the most interesting subject to a man is himself."

"I've seen Madame Dominguez to-day, and, while she is not furious, as I fancied she would be, she is bent on playing you a trick. I don't know what it will be, but I can imagine. Do you drink?"

"I drink wine at the table, but never elsewhere."

"I suspect that she means to get you tipsy through some of her friends, and then, adroitly, put you in a compromising position. I've heard of *ruses* of the sort, so you must be on your guard; and, above all, in the company of Herbert Grimstone and Hilliard."

"You'll make me think I am a personage pretty soon, if you continue these startling surmises. Why, in Heaven's name, should Madame Dominguez concern herself with me—a woman who has the whole world to fetch and carry at her command? Don't you think you are just a little sentimental, even in your cynicisms? I shall never meet this woman again; our lines in life lie in widely different directions. It was a whim that moved her to ask Herbert to bring me to her. Probably she was curious to see the hero, or the ninny, of the 'Tomahawk's' story. She will have forgotten my existence in a week."

"Well, you shall see that you have not done with her; but, if you are not given to young men's dissipation, you have nothing immediate to fear. Now, another point. Remember, I am old enough to be your mother, and I may take the liberty of advising you and aiding you," and the hand he held gave his own a little motherly pressure. "I want you to get rich. There are various ways. You

will never get rich in journalism, unless you have rich backers. These you haven't, and it is not likely that you ever will with such a nature as yours. I wish you were more like Hilliard, for a time, though you wouldn't be nearly so charming. Do you know, young man, half the girls in society would give a year's income to blush as you are now blushing?" and she looked admiringly at the rising and receding color, as Fred turned his head away, with a half-vexed grin. "Yes, you must make money; we are all money-makers in modern life, and those who don't make money sink out of sight. Now, you have the brains to adorn money, and I'm determined you shall be rich. You can be that very easily, do you know it?"

"Obviously, I don't, or I should be rich now. I don't care so much for riches in themselves, but I'm beginning to see what they can do. But I'm dying to know the transmuting agent within my reach. I am feverish even, don't you see?" and he looked at her quite composedly, still caressing her hand.

"You can marry a girl with untold millions, if you will resolve to do it!" The hand was dropped as unceremoniously as a thistle-branch seized by the wrong end, and Fred got up precipitately.

"It is not fair to make sport of a fellow like this, Mrs. Circester. Surely you do not think me really a simpleton; come, now—confess that you think me what the French call a *fat*, self-conceited, empty-headed ninny, who believes the world a fool's paradise, because he looks at it through a fool's eyes?"

"Come back here and sit down; I can't talk if you don't; come—come—there, now—sit still, and don't be stupid. I *do* think you monstrously silly, but I don't think you a fool this time." It was the white hand that reached out and took the brown. "I have a magnetic current in my blood under favorable conditions; sit still and you will see"; and she laughed a gay, musical peal that went adorably with the seductive pose; "yes, you can marry Eleanor Grimstone, if you will go to work in the right way."

"I beg, Mrs. Circester, that you won't talk in this way. It is not fair to that generous young woman; she is a very good friend, and I am sure she likes me, because she respects me. What would she think if she heard such cold-blooded, mercenary traf-

ficking as this? Imagine your own daughter, Bella, the subject of such a conversation! I'm sure it would revolt you," and Fred looked quite hot and angry.

"Indeed, I hope the day may come when Bella's prospects may make her the subject of such a conversation. Poor child! there isn't much promise of it now. Let me finish: if you want to marry Nell Grimstone, nothing human can prevent you; there —there—sit still—I will say no more. Now, it isn't because of your *beaux yeux* that I am going over these things. I want to make you rich, because I want you to help me to get riches. I have another plan, which I am not ready to tell you just yet; but, *en attendant*, think of Nell, and ask yourself how near the truth I am the next time you are with her."

"I can settle that now. I don't love her. I never could love her as a man ought to love the woman he makes his wife; and where I don't love, I shall never marry; and I have told her this."

"You have told her that?"

"Yes, I have told her that in so many words."

"And, pray, how did you come to be talking with her on such a subject?" and Mrs. Circester now sat upright, her face animated, and her eyes eagerly fixed on the young man.

"As we were driving in the park, something brought up the subject of marriage—ah, yes—it was *à propos* of a grand match announced in the morning papers. The man was a poor bank-clerk, though of a highly considered family, and the girl very rich. I believe that I said I didn't envy him the life he must lead, pointed out as his wife's pensioner, and probably accused of marrying her solely for her means. Miss Grimstone took issue with me vehemently, and made the argument that it was rather a hard case for a rich girl that she couldn't marry the man of her choice because he shrank from envious gossip and scandal-mongering."

"She said that?"

"Yes; she grew eloquent on the subject, and we became warm in the discussion. I was purposely more explicit than I should have been, because I wanted her to understand that I was no fortune-hunter."

"And what was the end of this charming talk?"

"She vowed that if she loved a man, and saw that he was hesitating on such grounds, she would propose to him before witnesses; and I declare I believe she is capable of doing even that mad thing!"

"And when she proposes to you, what will you say?"

"Ah! I shall have an unexceptionable answer ready when that happens," and Fred got up, laughing boisterously.

"Madame, *est servie*," said Lucie, holding the *portière* aside for the mistress to pass out on the arm of her guest.

"Isn't Mr. Walter come in yet?"

"No, madame; he left word that dinner shouldn't wait, as he had some work to finish at the college."

"My poor, overworked boy!" sighed the mother; "that's why I must make some money. He must begin life with the same advantages as his set. You've no idea what a drain the education of that boy is.—Ah, Walter!" she exclaimed, as the young man entered, "I was afraid you were going to spend the night over your examination tasks again."

"I am going back to them," said the student, as he shook hands with Fred; "but I couldn't resist the pleasure of dining with my mamma; and now I am rewarded with such good company as the great journalist.—Do you know, Mr. Carew, our class think you a hero, and if you were a college man they would enroll you in the club."

"Ah, Walter! Mr. Carew is a busy man, a brain-worker, and has no time for such follies as take up yours."

"I'm afraid you give me credit I don't deserve. I should delight in 'these follies' if I had the means."

The dinner went on very gayly. After it was over, all three smoked cigarettes and drank coffee Turkish-fashion. *Guéridons* for each were placed on the rug, where the three sat luxuriously sipping the fragrant cup. Mrs. Circester was fond of foreign ways, and blew the smoke of her cigarette languidly in the air, as she sipped chartreuse, or coffee, just as she had done in Paris, Berlin, or St. Petersburg. She was at her best with these gentle stimulants, and talked gayly of her European adventures, ridiculing my lord duke and the serene state of his little

serene court, until Fred thought he stood in danger of an apoplectic stroke, he laughed so much. A little after nine, Walter, with an expression of marked reluctance, said he must go. He had a hideous cram for a conditional examination, and he was forced to put in every hour.

Fred dreaded a return to the discussion of himself, and boldly seized the Caudine Forks and held the position warily, by interesting the lady in talking about her son. That was a topic she gave no signs of exhausting her interest in. He was the best and sweetest boy; a diligent student, always at his studies, and not prematurely "fast," like the sons of so many of her friends that, unknown to them, were on the way to ruin. Fred quitted the curious union of worldliness and honesty shortly after ten, pleased with her aspirations for her son, and her evident unselfish devotion to the boy's interests. He was ashamed of his own cavalier way of receiving her expressions of generous concern about himself, and he wondered whether he were a fraud, fool, or imbecile, to be obliged to own his repugnance at her intervention in his destiny. He pondered how he could be so coldly critical, not to say antipathetic, to such genuine sensibility as the lady showed in her solicitude for his future, and the danger he ran from the wrath of "a woman scorned."

"Kind as her heart is, her counsels are dangerous; let us beware of Circe, even if the flowers of youth have faded on her lustrous form."

Though Herbert's chief guests, the Demoiselles Beauxjambes, Nudos, Cassecœur, and Legerpied, were not expected until quite midnight, Reynaud's large Mansard supper-room was animated by a dozen young men, in the fading flower of full dress that had gone through the vicissitudes of afternoon receptions, early dancing, and the theatre. To Fred's immeasurable surprise, almost the first familiar face was that of the student Walter. The boy looked up and blushed when he noticed Fred's eyes fixed on him but hurried to him, and, in an awkward attempt to be unconcerned and jocose, hoped that Fred would keep the fact of his (Walter's) presence dark at the Castlemarre. Fred reassured him, and the youth went back to where a group were engaged, at

a round green table, in a game of cards. Heaps of bills lay in front of Herbert, beside a small ledger of I. O. U's. So immersed was the young man in his play that he only took time to nod to Fred, as Raikes, who faced the door, whispered in his ear:

"There's the poor young man of the romance."

Herbert said, over his shoulder: "Amuse yourself, Carew; you know everybody; if you don't, the kid here," nodding to Walter, "will make you all known."

There were three or four journalists whom Fred knew; the rest were the men of Herbert's set, both in Cambridge and New York. The room was stiflingly hot, and Fred, going to the antechamber, sat down in the alcove to breathe a store of pure air, to keep his head clear for the ordeal of the supper. While he sat there, he heard a movement as of the breaking up of the card-party, and the loud greeting of new-comers. In a moment he distinguished Herbert's voice:

"Here, we can fix it in a second. Here's ink. You just indorse the note to me, and I will give you my I. O. U. for the change. As you see, I haven't a penny left."

"But I must use the two hundred in the morning," said a voice that Fred recognized as Walter's.

"You can do that; my name is good anywhere that you are in debt. This is just the same as a check." There was a moment's delay, and then, without further comment, the two went back to the supper-room, and Fred followed. There were a score or more in the room now—the manager, Victorien Wange; young Abeille, who came forward in delight and deference to salute his quondam benefactor; the group we met with Herbert the other day; and seven or eight, whom Fred merely knew by name, sons of rich men, addicted to pleasure, and passing their time wholly in search of it. All were in that condition brought about by a generous but not excessive use of wine, which inspires the democracy of conviviality.

Before the bottle all men are equal; and the young men, who would have stared with haughty surprise at some of Herbert's motley of merry-makers, in the first stages of intercourse, were not only affably intimate, but obtrusively, boresomely so. When the

ladies finally arrived, ushered in by the manager, Victorien Wange, there was a loud burst of cheers. Beauxjambes and her train appeared, just as they had quit the scene in the magnificence of "La Grande Duchesse." "La Duchesse," as she was universally called, was a woman of perhaps twenty-three, with an *embonpoint* not yet marked enough to destroy the matchless lines of a perfect figure. Her eyes were a dazzling black, mischievous, rollicking, restless, and engaging. Her face was singularly attractive, without being distinctly beautiful. Her lips were like the petals of a rose before it opens; her teeth dazzling; her hair a mysterious mass of many colors, never presenting the same effect twice.

Beauxjambes had suddenly sprung into popularity in a London concert-hall. She was the daughter of an English army officer, banished to Boulogne for debt and sharp practice in play. The girl grew from the age of seven until she was twenty in France, and was in tastes and aspect a Frenchwoman. Her English retained the most betwitching little accent, more particularly when her sententious phrases were followed by the lively actions which form part of the speech of the Gaul. She was the conceded queen of the *Bouffers* after her voice had been heard in Paris. But it was not her voice which had given her eminence.

It was an indescribable *abandon* of gesture, accompanied at certain comic parts in her song by a movement which was something between a kick and a courtesy. It was never seen without a roar of delight in the theatre, and a score of repetitions. Beauxjambes had won a dangerous success in Paris, and when a wild young marquis, whom the Empress had selected for a match of her own, offered the *bouffe* queen his hand and violet coronet, the minister of police secured an engagement for the lady over the sea. Her success was not less marked in New York, where for two years she had been the adored queen of such feasts as we are now to sit down to. At her feet was laid the homage of all that segment of young New York that cared to be thought "in the swim."

When a little after midnight Fred took his place at the head of Herbert's table, flanked by over twenty noisily jovial merry-makers, he would have given a great deal to be anywhere else. With the vaguest sort of a notion of what the banquet meant, he had

good-humoredly consented to serve as Herbert's master of ceremonies, and it was not until the company came in, the young men tipsily demonstrative, and the actresses a little cross and petulant, that he realized what he had done. But he was in for it, and determined to carry out his part. To his unspeakable relief, he found his duties quite perfunctory. Reynaud himself stood at the buffet, and directed the service of the supper, while Herbert introduced the guests to each other. To his still greater relief, Herbert took the foot of the table, which became virtually the head, as the four ladies, in honor of whom the feast was given, were seated near their entertainer. Champagne had been flowing freely for an hour before they sat down, but Fred remarked that those who drank did none the less justice to the exquisite supper, which Reynaud took care to make known to the journalists of the group was a *chef d'œuvre* beyond the rivalry of any other establishment in town.

On a hint from Herbert, Fred rapped the company to order. As there were ladies, and these ladies the guests of the evening, in a sense, the toasts would begin early, the chairman said, significantly, as, perhaps, later in the evening, many of those who felt called upon to express their admiration for the charming artistes might encounter inattentive ears! Furthermore, by having the toasts before the dessert, brevity, if not wit, would be assured. There was a general laugh; and when Fred, in a few but graceful phrases, called for the tributes to the ladies, all arose, bowing to the queen of the group, and with a cheer. While the uproar was at its loudest, a card was handed Herbert, and he left the room, returning in a moment with Hilliard and Rivers, who apologized for their tardiness by alleging a reception near Central Park.

To Hilliard was at once assigned the office of responding to "the ladies." He fortified himself with great calmness, swallowing a brimming goblet of champagne. He was already famous as one of the most amusing after-dinner talkers of the town, and he maintained his reputation that night. There was, as there must be in such efforts, much more in the manner than in the phraseology or ideas; for whoever read an after-dinner triumph, that had set the table in a roar, that bore out the impression of its de-

livery? Even Hamlet wisely refrained from giving the quips wherewith Yorick had overcome the feasters of his time. Hilliard began with a humorous apotheosis of the dramatic profession. "Its mission was to hold the mirror up to nature," he said, "and let the enlightened see what was best worth keeping in morals and conventions." (Derisive laughter from the plutocratic group.) —Yes," he continued, with mock gravity, "Beauty is a cult; those who minister on her altar"—and by accident his eye rested on Beauxjambes—"must carry away some of the sweetness that even the wasp gathers from the petal that opens for the more kindly bee."

"*Voilà un calembour bien fait!*" cries Beauxjambes, clapping two rosy hands glistening with diamonds. "*Monsieur Abeille—c'est à vous de répondre gentiment—n'est-ce pas?*"

"*Mais qui donc sont des guêpes?*" cries Abeille, with a fatuous look of complacency.

"We are all wasps who do not minister to the beauties whose fragrance sweetens our labors," continued Hilliard, regarding Abeille with mock severity; "the bee, too, has a sting as well as the wasp, and his sting is ingratitude."

"*Mais, très bien, c'est donc un poête celui-là?*" cries the delighted Beauxjambes. "*Monsieur le poête je te fais mes compliments,*" and she wafted a kiss to the intrepid moralist. Hilliard touched that part of the lapel of his coat which is supposed to cover the heart, and bowed very low. He continued his theme, growing broader as he touched the conditions of love and the kinship between the motive of the drama and the evolution of social life. He satirized the fragile pursuits of the golden youth upon whose favor the stage of the day depended for support, with an ironic grace and humor that drew tears from the eyes of all whose wits were sober enough to catch the meaning of the fanciful imagery that played through the satire, like sunlight through spring foliage. By a delicate periphrasis, *à propos* of the recent great ball, he reminded the fair guests that, though the company assembled in their honor was smaller than a recent great gathering, he couldn't resist the piquant indiscretion of informing them that the heirs of fifty millions were sitting at this table—worshipers at a more

seductive shrine—consecrated by the devotion of mind and heart and intellect!—that while it had taken thousands to make up the mass of millions represented at the father's feast, a score of the youthful elect laid the tribute of Crœsus at the feet of the beauty honoring the banquet of the son, the "Amphitryon of this symposium."

Whereupon frantic shouts, with confused calls, arose for "Grimy!" "Grims!" and "Grimstone!" in various degrees of maudlin unsteadiness.

But Herbert, bowing and blushing, with his hand clasped in Beauxjambes's, stammered something that couldn't be heard; and Raikes, after a good deal of uncertainty as to whether he should take the table, the chair, or the floor, as a rostrum, finally compromised by holding himself erect by the back of one braced against the other, poured out a ratchety but vehement panegyric of his illustrious and honored friend Grimstone. He had known him intimately for years; they had visited the country of the adorable Beauxjambes together, and had learned the art of making merry in that city of the senses—Paris. He could, he declared, or was understood to declare, match Bertie Grimstone against any man in New York as a man and gentleman. He evinced a willingness to fight any one disputing this ingenuous tribute. No one felt called on to dispute Herbert's claim to the virtues assigned him, and Raikes proceeded to confide further remarks to the table-leg, some one having removed the fortuitous piece of furniture that had supported him in his opening remarks.

Then it was rapturously agreed to that the divine Beauxjambes should sing, since she could not be called on to speak. Hilliard seated himself at the piano, and the rest formed a circle around the *diva*. He struck the notes of the song in "Madame Angôt":

> "Quand on conspire, quand sans frayeur
> On peut se dire conspirateur,
> Pour tout le monde il faut avoir,
> Perruque blonde, perruque blonde et collet noir."

Half of the company joined the chorus, portraying with more or less tipsy humor the exaggerated buffoonery of the scene. Then

Beauxjambes was forced to mount the table, bare now save as to glasses and cigarettes, and in an instant she was singing the convulsing duet in the same opera with Nudos, also pirouetting on the table, both dexterously avoiding the empty bottles that stood like extinguished foot-lights on the outer edge. Those who were able to keep their feet formed a line round the table, accompanying the chorus with a wild *carmagnole*, the movement varying from the extravagance of the *cancan* to the Shaker-like solemnity of the "walk around." When fatigue brought this dainty interlude to an end, it was proposed to read a poem in honor of Beauxjambes, which Van Dyck had extemporized. Mesdames were given chairs, and, seated on the table, the pyramids of bouquets banked on the mantel were strewed at their feet, and the company sat down in a Bacchanalian circle, their glasses filled, and their eyes fixed on the blushing goddesses.

Philip apologized for the lack of finish that an audience so critical would discover in his verses, but, as they were strophes in praise of one so beautiful, they would, if turned with Virgilian grace, seem crude and inconsequent in her presence.

"Hear, hear! bravo! *Allons voyons!*"

As he read, the company became accustomed to the refrain "Beauxjambes," which rang loud and long between each distich:

"I sing the goddess fair and free,
With pleasure as her ministry;
Not Leda with a single Jove
In guise of swan to rape her love;
But all the nymphs in beauty blent,
Who wins our heart in sacrament,
A dulcet deess throned on stars,
Whose glances heal the hearts she scars."

"Who is it proves the town's delight,
And makes the hours seem lead till night?
Beauxjambes!

"Who is it in the fairy bower
Adds mirth to music, grace to power?
Beauxjambes!

"Who is it, in the mimic scene,
In peasant *rôle* is still the queen?
Beauxjambes!

"Who is it turns the words to fire,
And piques the town to mad desire?
Beauxjambes!

"What siren's voice is sweet'st 'mong
The nymphs of beauty, wit, and song?
Beauxjambes!

"Whose grace enchants from toe to lips,
Like Venus in the Apocalypse?
Beauxjambes!

"Who holds in fief the hearts of men,
And transmutes love to life as when
Prometheus stole the fire?
Beauxjambes!

"Whose laugh is music—music mirth
That brings Elysia back to earth?
Beauxjambes!

"Then brim the nectar-cup alone—
To drink to such a paragon!
Beauxjambes!"

Etc., etc., etc.

These halting rhymes captivated the company, and were pronounced Anacreontic in derisive gravity by the literary group. Beauxjambes, bending from her throne, bestowed a chaste embrace on Van Dyck's head, which was in convenient propinquity, and the rest applauded uproariously. Herbert alone looked hostile disapproval, and, as she took the sheets on which the verses were written, he came close to her, whispering:

"Here is my poem, but you mustn't read it now," and he handed Walter's check for five hundred dollars to the enchantress. She looked at it a moment and her eyes sparkled, and, bending over him, rewarded him with an emphasized embrace, whereat the company applauded again a little enviously, and innumerable healths were drunk.

Fred at this sight made up his mind that he had seen enough, and, seeking out Rivers, asked him if he were ready to go.

"Of course not. The fun is only beginning. It isn't three o'clock yet—I will go at four. You will do well to stay. You ought to know something of this side of the life of the day—it will help you when you come to write your books. You might as well refuse to stand at the dissection-table in the study of physiology as refuse to benefit by such opportunities as this. Furthermore, to go now would mortally offend Grimstone, and would do you no good with the others. Stay where you are; we will go presently. Be careful not to play, when it is proposed. I see that it is not necessary to warn you to go shy with the champagne; it is a brutal tipple, and makes one pay next day for the things of wonder and delight it puts in one's brain at night. Beware of it! The Burgundy has no treason in it, and is, besides, a gentlemanly beverage, eclipsed by the vulgar sparkle of the fizz, one half of which now is doctored cider."

"But tell me, Rivers, are these—what shall I call them—Saturnalia—common? Who keeps them up—what is the object?"

"They are going on every night, here and elsewhere. They are kept up by rich men's sons; fortunately, none others could stand the expense. They are, as a consequence, a reflex of the taste of the best-bred and most favored youth of the town. I have seen the sons of bishops here, acting the Lovelace *rôle* of that hard-headed young Clodius, Grimstone—a fellow who lives only for his own pleasure, and has no more heart than a peanut. Read Suetonius and Virgil, and you will comprehend the meaning of these Eleusinian revels. We are ripening to decay as a community. To deal with the subject you must know it. So keep your eyes open and your head clear, and mark the world as it runs away," and the sage moved off and began a merry war with one of the dames who, with her spoil of the floral throne, had taken her seat in a corner.

The sun was shining when Fred finally slipped out, no one remarking his exit. Herbert was giving an order for breakfast, and the tipsy revelers showed no signs of going home.

CHAPTER X.

THE GENESIS OF A MONEY-MAKER.

AARON GRIMSTONE, as a type of that consummate product of the survival of the social fittest, the self-made man, requires a retrospective glimpse, not only for the better understanding of a very curious personality, but to enable us, by beginning at the outset, to comprehend the complex traits that lead to the catastrophe. Not only this, but, at a time when the world is emulous of winning wealth by the arts that make the Grimstones the arbiters of our destinies, no detail can be too trivial, no incident too *banal*. When, in 1847, Aaron, then a stalwart lad of twenty-one, set up his anvil in Valedo, that slatternly hamlet gave no promise of the urban wonder it is to-day. Fixed upon as an Indian trading-post in 1812, the oldest inhabitant, thirty years later, looked forward to no better fortune for the place than a red-brick custom-house, and a post-office, that should outshine the rival Canadian edifices on the opposite shore. Contrasted with the shifty New England quarry he had been starved out in, Aaron looked upon the careless abundance of his new home as the promise of a subsistence at least. When later he found work for his brawny arms twelve hours a day, and excellent pay for his toil, he was sure that he had done well, and that the future need have no terrors for him.

Early rising was not general in Valedo in those days. Beyond the publican who gave his sleepy countenance to the trim breakfast-room, as he speeded the parting guest, and the lad who sat in the lighthouse, waiting the sun as a signal to go to bed, there were few stirring in Valedo's windy street. But these few were sure to see the red glow in Aaron's smithy, and hear the cheery clangor of his hammer as he wrought the shoon that soon became the wonder of the country-side. The latest loiterer at night, too, was sure to see the smithy's glowing flame, and it soon became as natural to look for Grimstone's fire as the village-clock. For years his was the only anvil in Valedo, and, though the grimy corner behind the bellows became presently the village rostrum, it was

remarked that Aaron never remitted a blow to give an opinion, nor stifled a blaze to hear the momentous whisper in which some vicinage scandal was breathed. The fame of his handiwork brought him custom from all the neighboring towns, where the rich farmers set store by their horses. He had become as much a part of the vital energies of the town as the doctor, the preacher, or the town-clock, when an event came to pass that gave him the hearts of his fellow-citizens, and opened the way to that wonderful career which finally made him a power in the councils of the nation. A company, chartered to connect two great lakes by water, had reached Valedo in its operations; but, as the town was small, and its political ambition dormant, the contractors carelessly ignored its existence, both in buying stores and employing the idle. Worse than that, however, to bear, as I gather from the archives, was the insolence with which the company landed in the very streets of Valedo stores and munitions shipped to the neighboring and rival port of Carleo, whose harbor and docks were absurdly inferior to the capacious curves upon which Valedo clustered its scattered tenements. For weeks the town bore the indignity of seeing the contractors' stores dragged from Carleo and dumped along the outlined channel of the canal, and then actually carted through the town and stacked beyond the surveyed line.

Nor was this all, as the vivacious records of the time tell it; while the autumn was at hand, and hundreds of farmers were idle, the contractors' gangs "swarmed with foreigners, imported into the country by these canal monopolies to crush the natives to beggary, by reducing wages. These impoverished aliens, used to starvation at home, were content to take a mere pittance, to live on corn and pork, sleep under a mud hut, and work sixteen hours a day." The whole country about was in deep anger. The Valedoans took prompt action. A public meeting was called in the blacksmith's shop. Aaron was chosen "moderator," and the wrongs of the township were recited in a very imposing list of whereases, which were in due time presented by a committee, of which Aaron was one, to the contractors and the manager of the Valedo section of the canal. The company paid no heed

to the remonstrances. Valedo had held out longer than any of the other towns when the charter was before the Legislature, and had exacted high rates when the survey was made; as a consequence, the company, foreseeing that the canal was to greatly benefit the town, were quite indifferent to the outcry.

The season advanced, the winter came late and light, and work was pushed on vigorously, as, under their stipulations, the contractors were obliged to have the cut a mile or more through and beyond Valedo by the first of May. Now, it had not been supposed that the work could be kept on in all its branches so late. Hence the horses, having worn their shoes out, were useless, and the company was forced to call in such smiths as could be found about the neighboring villages. Aaron, so soon as he learned this condition of things, made a swift journey to Carleo. The company's stores of ready-made shoes, and the iron and nails for others, were in luggers lying at the wharf. Aaron bought up every ounce of iron and nails in the town, and at dark mounted his horse to return to Valedo. There was a fierce November wind during the night, and the next morning, when the canal contractors reached the wharf, the boats with their precious stores of iron had disappeared. Search was made for miles about in the lake, but they could not be found. It was not until the next spring that boys, diving in the water, came upon them a few yards from the wharf, in the deepest channel of the harbor. There was no suspicion at the time that the heavy scows had not drifted away from the shore, their fastenings being found worn away near the capstans. There was great disgust among the canal people. Work would be brought to a stand unless five hundred horses could be instantly shod. Not a shoe or nail was to be obtained in Carleo.

Grimstone had paid in advance for every vestige of shoeing in the town. It would take six weeks to send to Pittsburg or Troy, where, in those days, such work was supplied. Before noon the chief contractor was in Grimstone's shop. Aaron listened to the tale of disaster, and remarked that it was fortunate that he had just received a cargo from Canada, and besides had a good supply on hand. He was given a contract for shoeing five hundred horses, which he accepted only on condition that the company's stores

should be landed at Valedo, for that section of the canal, and that, wherever the foreign help gave out, preference should be given the able-bodied men of Valedo County. The contractor listened with surprise. He went out and saw the scow laden with Aaron's Canadian cargo, he listened once more to the blacksmith's review of the situation, and then he burst into a loud laugh. That was the only comment he made, but he scrutinized the phraseology of the paper drawn up for his signature, and went away pensive.

Whether he suspected the extent of Aaron's handiwork in the *ruse*, he never said; but, thereafter, he never took action without consulting the blacksmith. Nor did the company find cause to repent their bargain. His work was so honest, rapid, and enduring, that it was found an economy to intrust him with that branch of it; then he was given the whole line, and no objection put in the way when he established the main depot of the company in Valedo. This brought people, the people brought money, and the need for new buildings. Valedo soon began to show signs of its future possibilities. His new enterprise had taken Aaron from Valedo a good deal; but when he came back Marcellus returning to delivered Rome with the spoils of the Veiintians was not more rapturously welcomed than Aaron, as he surveyed the busy wharves, the extemporized cranes and warehouses, where waste had been but a few months before. This was the wonder the unobtrusive Yankee had wrought. But, in all this effusive adulation, the blacksmith showed another side of his character that presaged the qualities of the self-maker—he kept his own counsels; he never was surprised or flattered into an admission of his handiwork in the affair that had brought such luck to Valedo.

I don't know what the Church said of the matter, but it is on record that, so far as the popular sentiment could be ascertained, the end justified the means. There were a few, it seems, who held the sinking of the scows immoral, but these croakers were silenced by the derisive taunts of the town. It was envy, the majority said, that found wrong in a stroke of genius which had despoiled the Philistines of Carleo, and crowned the saints of Valedo with their own. It was the place of the Valedoans to be

grateful, and trust to Providence: when was Providence ever known to repulse the efforts of a long head?

Aaron's time became too precious to bestow upon the forge. He had gathered a good deal of money in the canal contracts, and had learned casually that the Eastern railway system was to be extended to Valedo and thence westward to Bigbrag, then a town not any larger than Valedo, though now the second or third largest city in the Union. When the surveys for the road-bed were finished, it was found that the blacksmith had bought all the village lands adjacent, as well as miles of farms through which the route lay. This all brought money, and plenty of it. He was set down as a demi-millionaire. In 1848 he married the daughter of one of his associate railway directors in Louisville, and her fortune was considered large for those days. Anecdotes illustrating his fecundity in devising means to frustrate rivals were the staple of Valedo gossip for years. But, as he amassed money, Grimstone's reticence grew upon him. He was never known to open a conversation first, unless on business requiring his initiative. In 1863 he became a banker, accepting from the Government a larger deposit than any institution out of New York city. When the war broke out, Valedo had grown to be a city of quite one hundred thousand inhabitants. The sudden crash threw everybody into disorder, and it was soon whispered that Grimstone held a third of the realty of the town in mortgages and foreclosures. Mrs. Grimstone was fond of company. The family occupied an imposing mansion in a pleasant, grassy avenue of Valedo, where the wealth of the town had set its bourns. The edifice was characteristic of the man. He had before his marriage built a white sandstone house, two stories high, and painfully plain. With the growth of their children, and the increasing social demands brought about by the city's rank, more room was found necessary. A house in New York had once impressed him, and sketching the outlines he gave the paper to a builder in Valedo, ordering him to make that cover as much of the old structure as he could. When the work was done the effect was a never-exhausted source of mirth to the Valedoans. The combination was as incongruous as a Cairene dome upon a Gothic temple. Nor was the interior less *bizarre*.

The new edifice was broken up into spacious *salons* and recesses; while just across the hallway the bewildered stranger stumbled down two awkward steps, and was lost in a labyrinth of low-ceiled rooms and old-fashioned crannies, that made the neighboring grandeur grotesque. No one ever remembered seeing Grimstone in the new part of his house. His own room was in the old wing, far from the street, and far from the intrusion of the household. Not a member of the family had ever seen much of the interior of his sanctum. The keeping it in order was intrusted to a gigantic negro, who had been a slave in his youth on the plantation of Mrs. Grimstone's mother. The doors of this *cachot* were of sheet-iron, the windows were lined with sliding panels of the same; the floor was of brick, and the walls of granite. As the dwelling was far from the settled part of the city, these precautions were not regarded as excessive, when the treasures to be guarded were considered.

His marriage made no difference in the passion of Aaron Grimstone's life. The devotion he had shown the forge he lavished upon each enterprise upon which he embarked in turn. He took a notion that he wanted a better hotel in Valedo. He offered a fair price for the existing one. The owner, knowing Grimstone's wealth, refused to sell.

Grimstone promptly bought ground facing the hotel, called in an architect, named the figures he was willing to expend, and set him to work. But, when the plan was submitted, Grimstone declined to pay within one hundred thousand dollars of the sum estimated. The architect explained that it was absolutely essential for the security of the building that this sum should be put in, that is, if Grimstone's idea was to be carried out. It could be done for one hundred thousand dollars less, but it would be unsafe, neither fire-proof nor shock-proof. Cheaper materials would have to be used, and as a man proud of his profession the architect declined to accept the responsibility of putting up such a building. Grimstone dismissed him coldly, called in another architect, gave him the plan, and told him to build it, and that he, the architect, was to be responsible for every penny over the specified sum. When the edifice was completed, it was given to a Swiss manager rent-

free for a year, with the sole condition that the prices should be so low that the other hotel must close its doors. That came to pass within the stipulated year, and the old building came into Grimstone's hands through foreclosure.

The minister of one of the Valedo churches had, in the course of one of those personal sermons which began to enliven the pulpit at the close of the war, alluded to Grimstone's heartlessness in money-getting. The church was situated in the center of a square but sparsely built upon. Within a year Grimstone had bought the ground surrounding the church, had reared masses of brick on three sides, and set the hammers of a bolt factory in operation. The body of the church was dark by day, and when the windows were open the fumes from the forges made the place intolerable. The society offered the ground for sale, but no one would buy it. They began negotiations for a dozen sites, but at the last moment found them taken from their hands. In despair, the offending preacher called his flock together, and, refusing to be the cause of their persecution, he quit the place. The society thereafter found not the least difficulty in transferring their ruined site to Grimstone for a far more desirable one under fine trees in the outskirts of the town.

A reckless little journal, published by a group of flighty college graduates, made sarcastic reference to Grimstone's *amours fragiles*, known and winked at by all the town. The paper was run to the ground in a month, and Grimstone held the mortgage when the scant property was knocked down. In 1870 Aaron Grimstone could do with the State of Appalachia what a baron under Barbarossa could do with *Rittergut*. He could, by a word, decide the choice of the men who were to be Governor, Senator, Congressmen, legislators, as in 1872 he was omnipotent in making General Ajax President. His own ambition no one knew; even his politics were in doubt. Sometimes he favored the Optimate, and sometimes the Ultrocrats. He had made Killgore Senator, causing his election by a Legislature in which the Ultrocrats held a majority on joint ballot. In those days Killgore was a poor man; but he was counted worth not less than a million in 1872, six years after his election.

Though one of the earlier settlers of Valedo, Grimstone was, if not a mystery, the least understood personality in the city. His interests were known to exist in every large town of the State of Appalachia. He owned mines in one place, coal-fields in another, blast-furnaces here, machine-shops there. He was director in forty railway lines in 1870, and president of two. He held controlling interests in lake and ocean lines, and had invested half a million in exploiting a newly invented watering-place on the sea-shore. He was, in short, one of that extraordinary group of men which has grown up in this country since the war, who, reversing the saying of Thiers, "govern, but do not reign." He was indulgent and undemonstratively affectionate with his son and daughter. Herbert's faults were all known to his father, who made no sign. He gave him an ample allowance, which he increased under no circumstances. When Herbert's money ran short, which it did every term, it was his mother and sister who slyly made up the deficit. In the evening, while the children were at home, Grimstone would sit with them in the dull, stuffy little sewing-room, and, though he said but little, he seemed to enjoy their prattle. If a stranger were announced, he would get up instantly and slip up-stairs by the rear, and be seen no more that night.

At the table he rarely spoke unless pointedly addressed. He was never known to talk to Mrs. Grimstone. When he went to Washington or New York, he never took his wife; and, when she went off for the summer, her husband never formed one of the party. They were not divided, quarrelsome, or unhappy in any way. Mrs. Grimstone was one of the rare women who look on a husband as a poet looks on a publisher—as a necessity; that is, tolerable, in proportion as he keeps himself at a distance, and holds to his prescriptive functions, claiming no rights! She was tranquilly happy in the possession of an abundant allowance—the most expensive diamonds in Valedo, the handsomest equipage, the best horses, the most spacious house, the handsomest son, if not the handsomest daughter, in the city. She always said "Mr. Grimstone," in speaking to or of her husband, and would hear details of his enterprises, unknown to her, from callers with perfect composure. Gossip busied itself industriously with the af-

fai.s of the family; but while it was undisputed that Grimstone had neither heart nor scruples, nor his wife any self-assertion, it was admitted that the hearth-stone was a peaceful one; that if it were true that Grimstone ruled by fear, he managed to give his sway the air of love. The boy and girl were left to grow up under such influences as chance threw them into. What this sort of guidance made of the boy, we have seen; we shall presently see the remarkable effect in Eleanor's conduct. She was the only member of the family that Valedoans looked in the face frankly, without a sense of treason; for against her the most vivacious gossip had never found it in heart to say a word, beyond gentle satire of the lurid colors that gave her the nickname of "Peony."

Herbert was counted like his father in secretiveness, selfishness, and adoration of money. The problem of making it he was spared learning. He was in training merely to practice the art of keeping it. But his passion for illicit joys, his indifference to the mere show of wealth, and the obligations of its possession, were but variations of his father's most marked traits. Perhaps the next best thing to making money, until the pyramidal million is ready to lean on, is the anatomy of the methods by which millions are made, and a glimpse of the joys that come to those who make the millions? We shall see all this as Aaron Grimstone pushes his career onward.

CHAPTER XI.

PROPAGANDA FIDES.

DURING that fantastic social novitiate in which Fred Carew was brought face to face with those imperial conditions where wealth alone dominates in this country, conditions he knew only by report since boyhood, he was in the state of ecstatic wonder described so piquantly by Voltaire during the salad period of his sojourn at *Sans-Souci*, where his wit made him the head of the great *Frede*rick's table, and his pen the master of that royal poet's heart;

when his bourgeois hands corrected the royal verses, and were kissed by the royal lips. Where the profound skeptic was merely lulled, Fred was conquered. He apotheosized all he saw; he accepted the social subterfuges as realities; he believed that the consideration shown him was real; that the amenities of the drawing-room were the expression of genuine sentiment; that, penniless, impotent dreamer as he was, society gave him countenance for the integrity in him, and took him on trust for the mere promise of his future!

When you are journeying in the realm of that respected monarch the Emperor of Morocco, the incident of travel that moves not the least of your wonder is the irksome delay that attends the stranger's admittance to such cities as pleasure, profit, or affairs may lead you, and you are held in long and vexatious parley at the gate. Sometimes you are asked prying questions, but, once admitted, the whole city is at your caprice. Into every house you may penetrate with perfect liberty; you are welcomed by the master, and, if one room alone is closed to you, it is in deference to the sacred law. I am reminded of this Oriental custom when Fred's journal dwells on his social conquests. He had been in New York five years, and beyond the limited social range in which journalists, artists, clergymen, and the like meet in semi-literary, semi-perfunctory groups, he had never seen the relaxations of the rich, the gay, and the "well born." Mystified, deluded, dazzled, he took the new world *au sérieux*. Within the next three months he found himself considered, if not cordially welcomed, in families whose names he had often heard people mention with a respectful lowering of the voice. Though aware of the handiwork of Mrs. Albion Circester and the Grimstone ladies in his behalf, Fred was lost in wonder over the completeness of the social conquest such agencies were enabled to bring about. To his amazement, almost to his terror, he found himself sharing the social vogue of Hilliard in the holy rood of social royalty. He was a good deal more perplexed than pleased with much of the distinction shown him.

He found that in proportion as the great people he came to know were uninteresting, even repellent, their consideration was haughty and ignobly condescending. The occult reasons that made

him seem welcome in the dominant social groups, he only vaguely conjectured. His unsophistication was a great help to him. Unconscious of the sharp lines and the imperceptible differentiations in the impinging congeries of the social system, he was saved the *gaucherie* of playing off families against families, the resource of the social adventurer tenacious of holding the ground he has gained, and bent upon enlarging his ground of action.

Fred's perplexities, however, increased as the field of his social observation enlarged. His acquaintances were now beyond all keeping track of. He didn't know how he had made many of them, but he found himself expected at houses where he was told only the *élite* of New York were admitted. He was vaguely dissatisfied with all he saw, for the experience of one evening was the experience of all other evenings—the same doings, the same dresses, the same posing, the same gossip, the same damning equivocal praises, and annihilating leer. He couldn't believe that he had part in the sacred arcana of New York's "best," even when Mrs. Circester, sauntering through the stately halls of the Castors, said:

"These are the Vere de Veres of our social system; of course they are not your friends. In society there is no friendship. These people are an aid to you so long as they face you; let them turn their back, and you are in the dark."

Brought together again by the current into which their destinies had swirled them, Fred and Hilliard were too disparate in nature to ever meet again as comrades. Fred was helplessly absorbed, watching the phenomena of the stream in which he was swirling onward, he knew not whither; while Hilliard was like a keen pilot, conducting a craft through a channel in which he expected to make gains of the human flotsam. Hilliard and Carew were learning lessons in the life of these times, as you see, each with identical visual focus construing the same lessons differently.

But, while both were receiving impressions in the new world opened to them by their similar destinies, each was assimilating the lessons inversely. While Hilliard was allowing the externals of his new associations to revolutionize his sensibilities,

Carew was becoming more and more devoted to his ideals. Fred believed that the life of the individual was a part of the universal monument of mind. Hilliard believed that the individual was indeterminate, and must attach himself to a group; the more powerful the group the more potential the individuality, as he shared the results of the whole, irrespective of his own particular contribution to the forces at work. From the former principle, the Luthers, Savonarolas, Bacons, and Jeffersons came to their work; from the latter, the Napoleons, Bismarcks, and Tweeds.

The one sets the serenity of believing before the pride of knowing: the one loves knowledge by caprice, the other by *ennui* of ignorance alone; the one a *naïf* assimilator, the other a redoubtable analyst, subtile, perspicacious, wrenching the forces of good and evil alike by the roots to discover where the secret of growth lies hidden.

When we sacrifice sentiment to reason, we gain a ripened fruit without the seed of reproduction, a piece of perfected handiwork that leaves no trace of the means by which it is fashioned. But Fred's was not the fault of the supine; his imagination was the factor that carried him over the inertia of that dangerous repose that stupefies the fanatic or devotee. The new life he had begun to lead had unfitted Fred for the sort of work he had adopted. The repose and concentration needed for literary work can not be conjured in the intervals of social diversion. His work had lessened steadily; that is, his capacity to turn out fresh, striking, original studies of the subjects that were acceptable to the daily and weekly journals, was almost gone. His income had run down, as his expenses increased. Worse than all, he found his desk irksome, and the mere physical part of composition a hateful drudgery. He was falling into that first abysm of the brain-worker, repulsion to patiently study out and then carefully elaborate his material. He relied on *tours de force* to produce striking effects, and, of course, as his meditations were less and less part of his daily life, such efforts were shallow and rather empty.

He was frequently mortified by the rejection of manuscript, where a few months before he had met cordial welcome and high pay. It was in vain that he set a limit to his social indulgence. His

heart was in his pleasure, not his labor; and day by day his capacity for labor diminished. He resolved to fly the siren, but deferred from day to day, hoping that his old love of the desk would come back. At this crisis he received a very handsome proposal to go to Saratoga to write letters during the season for a weekly journal of standing. The project seemed to him a stroke of fortune. He knew nothing of watering-place life. He saw only that it would wean him from the *fainéantise* into which he had fallen, and he accepted the engagement with alacrity. He was, however, somewhat disconcerted, when on going to tell Mrs. Circester of his purpose, to learn that she had taken rooms at Saratoga for the summer, and that the Grimstones were also to be there within a few weeks.

"It's just what you need, *mon cher*," cried Mrs. Circester. "You will see society *en villégiature*, and you will make real friends, because people are less artificial, less exacting in *convenances*. If you play your points well, you will end the season engaged to a million."

"Then I shall not play my points well, I can tell you that in advance. I'm glad you're going to be there, but I'm not so glad all the rest of the grand world are going. I've made a sad waste of my time for a year past. I mean to return to my tub, so soon as Saratoga is ended," Fred says, with grave conviction.

"Well, we shall see. What folly! You've gained a footing men with millions intrigue for in vain; your name is on the list of every house in town worth visiting; you are received as a millionaire, treated as a millionaire, and it is expected that you will be one. Society would never forgive you if you disappointed its estimate of you. I've made a wager that you will marry a million before Hilliard; and you know there's one thing the most amiable woman never forgives!"

"I think you give me too much credit; I thought, judging from what I see, that there was nothing an amiable woman couldn't forgive."

"Ah, ah! he's training a little *racine* of skepticism in his garden of faith! It is well, I've more hope of you," and Mrs. Circester laughed a little gratulatory laugh, that vexed Fred—he didn't know why.

When, a day or two later, the young man stepped out of the omnibus at Saratoga, and saw the vast outlines of the hotel to which he had been commended by his editor, he instantly made up his mind that he would remain there only long enough to enable him to find quieter and more workman-like quarters in the village. Abashed by the imperious indecision of the young man at the desk, he modestly waited his turn to make known his want of a quiet room. To his great surprise, the almost disdainful air vanished as soon as he mentioned his name. The lordly young man turned and whispered to another personage seated at a desk. This person arose with alacrity.

"We have saved a room for you in the most desirable part of the house, Mr. Carew."

"There must be some mistake," said Fred, in confusion. "I didn't write!"

"Ah, yes! we've made no mistake; Mr. Alfred Carew, of the 'Minerva,' is it not?"

"Yes, I'm Alfred Carew, and I'm writing for the 'Minerva;' but how did you know it?"

"Oh, we have a way of finding out people of influence. It's all right. You will be well cared for here, Mr. Carew, I can promise you."

A good deal mystified, Fred was led to a charming, airy room, commanding a view of the wide, shady street, and, though a good deal troubled by the probable cost, he relinquished himself to the comfort of the place, resolved that he would make his stay very short. The mystery of his welcome was explained after the reception of his first letter at the "Minerva" office. The editor wrote, approving his work, and wound up by hoping that the "Marathon" folks had treated him well. They had been apprised that he was coming, and directed to show him every attention. The bills, he added, would be taken care of by the office. Certainly, Fred thought, the "Minerva" was a thoughtful and generous employer. He was, however, sorry that the arrangement had been made, as he would have preferred a more tranquil lodging. When he went into the vast dining-room he was painfully embarrassed. Looking helplessly at the sauntering waiters, whose

eyes he found it impossible to catch, he wandered farther and farther in search of a place to seat himself. All the chairs were turned up, indicating a previous lien. In one or two places, where they were not thus tilted, he was curtly informed that he could not be accommodated. He was about to turn back to ask the man at the door for a seat, when a waiter knocked against him, then turning, and nodding over his shoulder, pointed out a place near the wall. Mortified and indignant, he sat down and waited to be served. At various tables he saw people whom he had met in New York, some of whom he knew quite well, but they didn't seem to recognize him. The tables gradually filled, but no one offered to serve him. The delay became more and more embarrassing as he saw persons placed at the same table, long after he was seated, served by the waiters. He was just about to rise and leave the room, when one of the clerks entered and handed a letter to a gentleman at the same table. Noticing Fred's red and angry face, he bowed deferentially and asked:

"Are you well served, Mr. Carew? Wouldn't you rather have an end table?"

"I'm not served at all, and I don't care a straw what table I sit at, if I can get something to eat," he said, crossly.

"Oh, it's a mistake; I'll soon fix that."

Beckoning one of the waiters, the clerk said something in a low tone, and the attention that followed became almost as irritating as the previous neglect. Fred had been kept so long at the table, without being served, that all his neighbors had finished as his second course came on. When it was brought, the head waiter, arranging the wine-glasses, said, unctuously:

"We didn't know you, sir, or you should have had a better table; but we will give you that one, by the window, to-morrow. Mr. Mauger also wants to know which you prefer, Bordeaux or Burgundy?" and he held up a bottle of Larose and Chambertin in each hand.

Now Fred was so innocent of the ways of hotel life that he had no suspicion that the wine was not, like the food, included in the *menu*. He knew that it was the rule at foreign *tables d'hôte*, and at French restaurants in New York. So he tranquilly made

choice of the Burgundy, which was regularly served at his plate during his stay. Nearly every night, if he dined alone, came a bottle of champagne *frappé*, with the compliments of Mr. Mauger, the proprietor. This, however, he protested against, but the host only laughed, saying that there was no other way of getting rid of his stock.

Left to himself to muse much of the time, as he knew no one intimately, his old love of his desk returned, and his letters were brimming over with a fresh and joyous delight of the place, that soon began to give them wide publicity. They were copied far and near, and the young man observed that the hotel people counted him as the cause of their excellent business, which had been languishing before he began to write. His very ignorance was a help to him. He wrote of the springs, the walks, the drives, the irrepressible life of the hotel, as a cultivated Chinaman suddenly set down in the Arcadian groves of Versailles might have written, surrounded by the gay world of the *grand monarque* in the Watteau epoch of the monarchy. Saratoga was only beginning then, in 1872, to take on the state that now makes it the delight of the *mondaine*. To the young dreamer, worn out with the heat and dust of New York, it was a paradise, and his letters reflected the generous enthusiasm he felt. Things that seemed commonplace and trivial enough to his rivals, and the jaded senses of the visitors, were by his fancy transformed into rare beauty, and the day divided into hours of idyllic enjoyment, that made the reader yearn to be part and participant of the episodes.

Even the sort who haunt watering-places, to confide their *ennui*, were allured by the charm with which the enthusiast invested old scenes and familiar diversions, and the delighted hotel people soon welcomed crowds that had for years deserted Saratoga for Long Branch and Cape May. Unconscious of his handiwork, unconscious, too, of the interest taken in him, Fred made no acquaintances, accepted the courtesies heaped upon him, the deference shown him by the hotel people, as part of the life of the place, and, of course, reflected the spirit of it in his letters. He had no idea that he was known as a correspondent, much less identified by everybody as the writer of the poetic letters in the "Minerva," nor

imagined, as he sat on the veranda of an evening, listening to the orchestra, that he was the topic of many gossips. He took the restfulness of the place so literally, that it was with a sense of worldly intrusion that he learned one day of the arrival of the Grimstones and Mrs. Circester. He was at once made to feel that he was a member of the group. His plate was laid at their table, and his time disposed of quite as if he were a member of the family. Eleanor was acting hostess to a daughter of Senator Killgore, and informed Fred that he was to be the cavalier of that young lady, whenever she was herself in no need of his escort! She told him, with great composure, that she expected him to devote himself entirely to herself and party, and began by outlining a plan of operations that would have taken up every waking hour of his time during the month she proposed remaining! She was so frankly enchanted at finding him there, and so free in telling it openly, that Mrs. Circester couldn't resist a significant smile at the table, where the vivacious *ingénue* so artlessly discovered her preference.

"Then here's my dear Betty Killgore, just out of Vassar, and dying to do the German. I've told her of your passion for dancing, and, when I'm not on the floor myself, you may dance with Bet!"

"Eleanor, how you go on! If Mr. Carew is a wise man, he will keep away from us, and let us look up a victim among the idle people," and Miss Killgore looked pensively at the young man, as if to ask him to make an estimate of her by such qualities as he should discover in her, and not from the hasty generalizations that Eleanor's impulsive speech suggested, But it was very much as the latter had ruled; Fred, instead of dreaming on the verandas during the evening, passed most of the time in the ball-room with Nell, Betty finding numerous young men more than willing to endure the hot bath of summer dancing, to look into her wicked black eyes, and move in a delirious embrace under the glare of the chandeliers. The next morning the dancers met in the breakfast-room very late. They were to drive to the lake in the afternoon, and pass the morning at the springs. But as they reached the veranda the soft notes of a Strauss waltz invited them

irresistibly, and for an hour they renewed the delights of the evening before, in the "Matinée German." After luncheon the Grimstone equipage drove up to the piazza, and the two young ladies, Mrs. Circester, Fred, and young Raikes, set out for the lake.

They passed the afternoon there, took dinner at the water's edge, rowed until ten o'clock, and reached the hotel in time to take up the dance again. Fred went to his room at midnight, bitterly disappointed with himself. His writing, which he had hitherto pushed on with the regularity of clock-work, was now wholly broken up. He sat down, jaded and angry, and wrote till morning, and of course rose at noon, unrefreshed, and showing signs of the strain. Mrs. Circester, meeting him as he came from the breakfast-room, took his arm and led him into the garden. There, seated in comparative privacy, she carefully spread the fluffy stuff she was fabricating into some not easily comprehensible article of use or adornment upon her knee, and began:

"Young gentleman, you can't stand this sort of thing; your eyes look as though you hadn't slept for a week, and you would do just as you are for a frightful example of dissipation. You can't afford it. If you were rich, and here only for pleasure, it would be another thing. Your capital is your brain and your youth; when you draw on these you are going toward bankruptcy. You must refuse to dance at night; *ménagez* your resources, and thus be able to meet your rivals on equal terms."

"Excellent advice, Madame Solomon, but how is a fellow to follow it, whose heels fly out at the scraping of a fiddle?"

"Don't go where such ill-ordered heels are liable to be tempted. You'll get a respite after to-morrow. Hilliard is coming, and he is fond of dancing, and Nell is fonder of him than she is of you." This was said with adroit carelessness, as she gave all of her immortal mind to the splicing of a refractory end of the wool broken off at an awkward point in the web of radiant colors she was weaving.

As Fred said nothing, and persisted in staring studiously at a child improvising a net from her straw hat to fish a drowned butterfly from the fountain, she continued:

"What do you think of Betty Killgore? She is rich, and one of these days she will preside in the White House."

"Why, I thought General Ajax was already married?"

"Don't be stupid. Killgore will be the next President—every one admits that—and Betty will be the lady of the house, as Mrs. Killgore has begun proceedings for a divorce."

"Why, in that case, the lady of the White House will be Madame Dominguez." Fred stopped and blushed; he had spoken without thinking.

Mrs. Circester held up one of her needles reflectively. "No, we're not yet quite so advanced as that. We have our Pompadours and Maintenons, but *en cachet*. La marquise will rule the king, but she won't share the throne. Betty is a charming girl. She has more manners than Nell, is less impulsive, is a good deal more ambitious, and sets very small store on money. That's because she has plenty, and will have more. She is fond of literary folks, and I'm told writes Swinburne poetry, whatever that is."

"It's mostly blood and wine, with a bouquet of hyssop," said Fred, owlishly, as though he had settled the poet in a phrase.

"I don't know what you mean, but I suppose you do," said Mrs. Circester, with a confidence that spoke volumes for her credulity in Fred's intellectual discernment.

"I'm glad Hilliard's coming," said Fred, after a pause. "I had made up my mind to abjure the follies that I find exist even in this perfect world, where, until you came, I worshiped Nature!"

"Charming testimonial that, *merci bien!*"

"Oh, you know that is only a form of speech! Of course you know I'm enchanted to be near you. What I meant was, that I worked and thought before the butterfly host came down upon the place, and now the temptation is on me to be a beetle among the butterflies."

"Whereas it's a duty to be a grub."

"Exactly. And now listen to this vow, registered in these deciduous shades, this temple of Nature, vernal antechamber of Moloch!"

"Dear me, how mystic and charming! Do put that in your *next* letter."

"You have interrupted the agony of extemporization; here's the vow: I will dance no more at night. I will devote the morning to writing. I will give myself to the seduction of beauty and wit only during the afternoon."

"Good! We shall now see the stuff you're made of. If you can stick to that, you are safe; if not, take the advice given the prophet: fly unto a far country and tarry until the evil one is conquered."

But Fred found it very easy to keep his pledge. So soon as Hilliard came, Nell equably transferred her caressing fascination to that idol, dispensing Fred from further allegiance with a frankness that secretly rather irritated him, for the most Platonic constancy is not proof against the bald avowal of mere amity where love might not be impossible. Even tepid water gurgles into action when ice is suddenly plunged into it. Fred's *amour propre* was wounded, but he gave no sign, greatly to Mrs. Circester's chagrin, who, you may be sure, left no resource untried to stimulate her *protégé* into a passion for the heiress. Like a consummate strategist, she gradually brought Betty and Fred into the intimacy so facile between young people at a summer resort. Betty was fond of the woods, fond of walking, fond of reading under leafy coverts; and, as these were the young man's delight, they were not slow in finding a congenial, common ground for a mutual esteem, which was too frankly avowed to lead to misconstruction.

Herbert came presently with the coterie of young spendthrifts Fred had met with him in New York. To them the place was a change of scene, not a change of pleasures. They did little dancing, but were rarely seen out of their rooms before midday. Herbert had been expelled from Harvard, and was in disgrace with his father, who remained in Valedo.

One day, walking in the woods with Miss Killgore, Fred came upon Herbert, Raikes, and Vandyck, who were chattering boisterously with a group of young ladies, indulging in a small *fête champêtre*. To his amazement, Beauxjambes was among them. She looked up and grinned, but did not speak, as Fred turned and led his companion away by another path.

"Who were the ladies with Herbert? I think I've seen that pretty blonde with dark eyes somewhere before," asked Betty, guilelessly.

"They are New York friends of Herbert's," Fred said, making pretense of struggling with a refractory brier that persisted in coiling about his feet.

"Why didn't they invite us to join them?"

"Very likely they didn't want us," answered Fred, airily turning his face away to conceal a grin.

"I've certainly seen that girl; her face is perfectly familiar," Betty persisted. "What is her name?"

"Look out, there!" But, before the astonished Betty could look, Fred had seized her bodily and lifted her from the ground. She screamed lightly, asking:

"Good heavens! What is it—a snake?"

"Yes, a monstrous one, too. I think it had horns. Stay here till I see what's become of it."

"Oh, dear, no—let it go! I shall scream if you leave me here! I insist on your holding me; it might bite you. Do come away!"

"That's true, it might. I hadn't thought of that. Some snakes do bite, and it would be just like this one to ruin a fellow's shoe or trousers. As you say, it will be wiser to leave it in the field. It isn't the part of valor, but then there isn't much glory in killing a snake. One couldn't coil it around his victorious brow as a laurel, neither could one send it to the cook as an evidence of his prowess."

"Ugh! I'm sure there are scores of them here!" and Betty held up her skirts, stepping in a gingerly fashion over the mosses and tufts of grass, clutching Fred's arm, and looking around on the ground, sure that a snake's eye was upon her. Fred kept up the comedy until they reached the spring, where a draught of iron water restored the young woman's equanimity.

Meeting Herbert later in the day, that youth laughed in Fred's face as he saw the mute question in his eye.

"You were surprised, were you, old man?"

"Well, I wasn't so much surprised as shocked. Don't you

think it rather imprudent to indulge your caprice here, while your family are liable at any moment to encounter mademoiselle?"

"And what if they do? Do you suppose they think me a saint?" cried the reprobate, grinning and unabashed.

"If adoration implied such a belief, I should think they did."

"Oh, no, that shows how little you know of women. They adore me because they know I'm a scamp, and I need it at home because I can't get it abroad. Beauxjambes wants me to bring you around to-night. We're going to have what she calls a *causerie intime*. I will come for you at ten o'clock."

Fred's impulse was to refuse, but, remembering that he had already affronted one of Herbert's feminine allies by his fastidiousness, he agreed to go, and set himself to work during the afternoon, knowing pretty well what a *causerie* in such company as Beauxjambes was likely to be.

Mrs. Grimstone gave a dinner that evening, and the company was made up of Romeyn, Raikes, Van Dyck, Hilliard, Dorr, who arrived during the afternoon, Mrs. Van Bourseman, Mrs. Circester, Senator Killgore, and Betty. Fred was placed beside the latter, while Nell sat between Dorr and Hilliard. Nell informed the young men that she had ordered carriages for nine o'clock, and they were going to take a moonlight drive to the lake. Herbert exclaimed:

"How unfortunate! We've made our engagements to attend a political conference at ten o'clock. We're going to arrange a circular to send out in the morning by telegraph, and we've got Carew to promise to draft it for us."

The readiness and *aplomb* of this ingenious invention struck Fred dumb. The other young men in the secret of the meditated carousal dared not look at each other, and made pretense of profound interest in the suspended remarks of their neighbors.

"How provoking! I meant it for a delightful surprise!" cried Nell, looking at her brother indignantly. "I don't believe a word of it; you aren't interested in politics at all; and, besides, Mr. Carew's an Ultrocrat. How can he join in an Optimate meeting?"

"Mr. Carew's a journalist," said Herbert, "and writes not what pleases him but what pays him."

Fred flushed scarlet. Mrs. Circester, who sat next him, seized his arm under the table as he put it down to push the chair back, and whispered under her breath:

"Don't you see he doesn't comprehend the significance of what he says? Be quiet. This isn't the place for a scene."

Fred looked at Herbert, but his face gave no sign of the ulterior meaning of his brutal inspiration. He was evidently intent only on making the way clear for Beauxjambes's engagement. Nell looked frightened, and Hilliard said, quietly:

"Yes, the journalist, like the priest, has to mix with sinners as well as saints, to teach both the same faith, and he looks to Heaven to absolve him from the sin of participation."

"Well, let me, as a sinner," rejoined Herbert, "apologize for a clumsy saying that I meant for a compliment."

He raised his glass to Fred, but the latter merely inclined his head and looked away. Herbert had attained his object; there was nothing more said of the drive, and when, at ten o'clock, the young men rose to go to the meeting, Fred left the room also, but he did not go with the rest of the party to Beauxjambes's. In a few minutes he received a card from Herbert, saying:

"MY DEAR CAREW: Don't mind my stupid words at the table. I only meant to get you clear of the drive. You know I couldn't be guilty of such a rudeness."

He sent back word declining to go, and wrote until the birds sang at his window, and the flaming gas-jets were absorbed in the yellow sunlight, like icicles in rushing water.

CHAPTER XII.

THE WINGS OF ICARUS.

WORKING far into the morning hours, his old habit in journalism, suited Fred better than day-work, and he came down to breakfast near midday with no sign of his night-vigil in face or

manner. There were few in the room. He was reading the morning newspaper, and didn't observe the entrance of Hilliard until he took a place in front of him at the table. Fred was by no means overjoyed with the prince's company, and, after a rather frigid salutation, went on reading. Hilliard, however, having glanced over the news, threw the paper down, and, tapping the end of an egg with his spoon, uttered a little preliminary "Ah!" which was his recognized signal of being willing to talk. Fred made no sign of remarking the condescension, and kept on with his reading.

"That was a nasty freak of young Bert's, last night, Carew. I want to make you my compliment on your good sense in keeping cool. Keeping cool is the Jack Rose of good form; only under-bred people match insolence with anger. You can always tell a thorough-bred by the way he meets upstart manners. The day has gone by when gentlemen resent slips at the board by flinging a glass at the offender's head. I think the cub would have been delighted, last night, if you had compromised yourself by such an indiscretion. The affront was so brutal that I feared you were going to break his head, then and there. That was why I intervened to give you time for the wiser second thought, which is always better in love and war. I think he didn't quite realize the *mal entendu* of his words, but the fact that they came to his tongue, when half fuddled by his wine, shows that the sentiment was in his sober thought. If I were you, I should take the first convenient opportunity for mending his manners by breaking his bones."

"I propose to," said Fred, quietly, wondering what interest Hilliard had in pushing the quarrel. The latter gave an approving nod, and then went on:

"The cub made you miss a characteristic outbreak of the high-life indulgence of the day. Beauxjambes presided. She is established in a cottage, paid for by young Jackanapes. It is mounted as only a Frenchwoman could mount it, and must have cost a handsome penny. All the younger men of the town were there, and the play ran as high as at Morrissey's. Beauxjambes sang, and at midnight a dozen young millionaires were running amuck

in the *cancan*. Bertie is a shifty youth. He drank copiously at dinner, as you saw, and he didn't spare his favorite tipple—champagne and Burgundy mixed at '*L'asile*,' as Beauxjambes calls her cottage; but, instead of dancing, he played all the time, and had won quite one thousand dollars when I came away at three o'clock.

"He let Rex Romeyn do the honors with Beauxjambes, and that youth didn't spare himself. I left them hilarious and uproarious, and they are probably there still, for many of them were even at three o'clock beyond the power of walking. Ah! it's a gay life, that, of these sons of self-made Plutocrats. We are training a fine race for our masters. By heavens! it makes a man sigh for the backwoods, or a dose of the lead and fire of Puritanism, when he thinks of that Silenus horde I saw there last night, in such bestial indulgence as Zola would shrink from embalming. Are they the elect who edit our social code, make our household laws, and give men of parts and possibilities the stamp of success or failure?"

"Isn't this a new *rôle* for you?" asked Fred, in surprise, as Hilliard's Jeremiad ended. "But I don't agree with you at all. There are objects in life that such people have no power to influence. They have no part in the serious business of the time. There are rewards for honor, sobriety, and integrity that such Capuans as these can never deflect or influence one jot."

"What are they? Name a single ambition in life that these men can not, directly or indirectly, make impossible to a man? They can make the most blameless life hideous; they can make the most upright man a pariah; they can block the path in every profession. In journalism they are omnipotent, for, if they can't ruin a man, as they came near ruining you, they can buy the stock of the journals and deprive them of their daily bread. Look at what happened the other day. One of the great journals of the country opposed Dorr, held up his methods to public hatred, unearthed rascalities that would in any other country in Christendom send him to the galleys. He sows dissension among the stockholders, ruins the property, and then buys it, and now actually directs the paper that for years held him up to public indignation and horror."

"Is it really true that Dorr runs the 'Forum'?"

"I know it to be true. I was in the Union League one night, half dozing in the library. I pulled a window-curtain over me, and was, I suppose, quite concealed. Half dozing, I recognized the voice of Winslow Wayne. He was pleading as a man pleads for respite when sentence has been pronounced. He was exhibiting papers, as I could tell by the crackling. He read a statement of receipts and expenditures, circulation, advertisements, and what not, showing the financial status of the 'Forum.' He explained the enormous value the paper would be to a man like Dorr, interested in such variable stocks. Then, for the first time, the other spoke, and the voice was Dorr's:

"'But it would be of no value to me so soon as the public found out that I owned it.'

"'The public needn't find that out.'

"I was quite awake, and realized that I was in a dishonorable part, and I turned about to make known my presence. They got up and left the room, and the next day it was announced that Wayne, who hadn't ten thousand dollars to his name, had bought the controlling interest in the 'Forum,' and that the policy of its founder would be continued. That was three months ago. Since then, Dorr's name has never been mentioned, although before that he was denounced daily as the corrupter of our courts, the wrecker of railways, the demon of the Stock Exchange, the master of every occult agency in legislation. Who do you suppose is strong enough to fight against such a force as that? If Dorr takes the notion, he will control every journal in the country, and, as it is, he has a curious way of silencing many of them when he cares to."

"Politics, young men, such a morning as this? I am ashamed of you!" It was Mrs. Circester who spoke. She had come in while Hilliard was speaking and heard the last sentence.

"No; morals—they are always in order, even though there be none in Saratoga, or, if there be, veiled like the vestals, to make us hold them in awe, while we leave them to the immortals to practice," returned Hilliard, as he arose and placed a chair for her.

"*Tiens—tiens;* that's an ungallant sentiment for the *preux chevalier* of society. Does it mean check in love, or disaster in Wall Street war?"

"Oh, dear, no; he comes too near who comes to be denied in either of these lists, and I have not yet entered there," replied Hilliard.

"Vague, but it will do. I'm glad I've found you together. Mrs. Grimstone and Eleanor are miserably unhappy about Bertie's conduct last night, and I have undertaken a mission of peace. I want you, Mr. Carew, to promise to carry the quarrel no further, and give Herbert your hand. The affair was to the last degree trying, but Bertie wasn't quite himself, and any further notice of the affront will only make his mother and sister unhappy."

"Let us drop the subject," said Fred.

"Not till you give me your word that you will carry the affair no further."

Fred reflected a moment:

"If he gives me no cause, I shall ignore the business; but he deserves a thrashing, and I meant that he should have a sound one."

"*A la bonne heure;* I'll guarantee he'll give you no further cause."

On leaving the room, Mrs. Circester asked Fred to walk to the springs with her. On the way she resumed the topic of the table, and pointed out the folly of quarreling with Bertie:

"Unless," she added, reflectively, "he is carrying out Madame Dominguez's plan of revenge, I'm confident he meant nothing. I don't know whether you are aware of it or not, but it is a common belief that a journalist is like a lawyer, and will write anything he is paid for. I might have said the same thing, without dreaming of an affront. It is pure ignorance. Besides, what you look on as an insult, most people would regard simply as a statement of a fact, which would be considered a tribute to the journalist's cleverness."

"All I can say is that no journalist, worthy the name, will write what he doesn't believe, any more than a clergyman will preach a doctrine he holds to be unsound," retorted Fred, hotly.

At dinner, Fred found the table deserted; all his friends had gone to the races, except Mrs. Circester. She came in just after he sat down, and took a seat near him. When, on the removal

of the soup, the waiter set the glasses and opened the wine without any directions from Fred, Mrs. Circester looked at him with an amused smile, implying wonder at his expensive tastes.

"How can you support such extravagance?"

"Extravagant? What do you mean? The hotel furnishes it!"

"Of course, the hotel furnishes it, at a handsome profit."

"Why—what do you mean? The wine is part of the dinner, isn't it?"

"Yes, and a very desirable part for those who can afford such Chambertin as this," and Mrs. Circester sipped the purple nectar with the measured deliberation of a *gourmet*.

"The wine is included in the *table d'hôte*, isn't it? I always supposed so. I never ordered it!"

"Haven't you seen it in your bills? If you haven't, wait until you settle, my poor innocent, and you'll see how prominently it is included in the sum total."

Fred explained that his employers settled all the hotel bills.

She looked at him fixedly:

"Your office pays your expenses here?"

"Yes, so they wrote me."

"Ah!" and she smiled significantly; "then the office pays for your wine—extraordinary generosity, I must say, and eloquent proof of the consideration in which your work is held."

Still later, champagne was brought on in the same way, Fred having said nothing; Mrs. Circester smiled quizzically, but made no further comment. When the dinner was over, Fred went to the hotel-office and asked for Mr. Mauger, the host. He was not in the office. He had gone to the races; and Fred, saying that he had business with him when he returned, went to his room and set to writing, a good deal disturbed by the vague doubts Mrs. Circester's manner had suggested. It was ten o'clock when he finished his letter, and strolled out to post it. Returning, he sat down on the inner veranda, near the fountain, a place at that time of night always free from loungers. He had been seated but a little while when a party of men came out and sat down at a table arranged for them. They were drinking and smoking, but, as

there were no lights, Fred did not at first distinguish who they were. He sat thinking absently, only dimly conscious of the talk going on near him.

"He's a presuming beggar, like all his class; what right has he to come among gentlemen? He hasn't any money. He was at every house in the town last winter, and never bought a flower. 'Pon my soul, I don't think he ever paid for a carriage-hire."

"But how does he get in the swim?"

"Oh! professional. It's the craze now to have literary fellows, as it used to be to have singers. I don't know what they'll bore us with next—perhaps long-haired painter-fellows."

"But he dresses well, and I'm sure his manners are civilized."

"Oh! dress costs these people nothing. I believe all their bills are receipted for professional value received."

"But, how can he stand the Marathon's bills—and I notice he has two kinds of wine at dinner?"

Fred started. The voices were Van Dyck's and Romeyn's. It was Raikes who answered, laughing:

"That's not hard to account for. My governor is a stockholder in the concern, and I've seen the monthly statement. These newspaper chaps are lodged and fed free. That's always understood. They are 'dead-heads' everywhere. That's all right enough, if they knew how to keep their place; but when a damned upstart like this *poseur* pushes into the company of his betters, and affects equality, I say Bertie did the right thing in reminding him of his real *rôle*."

"Did you see the beggar, Bert, when you spoke? Damn it! I thought he was going to let fly his glass at you," and Romeyn laughed loudly at the recollection.

"He would have fired it, too, if that old cat, Circester, hadn't stopped him," Van Dyck rejoined, with a drawl.

They finished their drink, lighted their cigars, and relapsed into another theme. Fred arose quietly, went to the office, and asked for Mauger. That functionary received him with urbanity, led the way to his inner office, and wanted to know what his visitor would drink, at the same time proffering an open box of cigars.

Declining to either drink or smoke, Fred opened the business curtly:

"Mr. Mauger, I came to ask you a few questions that concern me. I am a novice in the work I have been doing this summer. I learn that my bills in this house are not paid. Is that true?"

"Why, my dear sir, who has said such a ridiculous thing?"

"Reginald Raikes, who says his father is a stockholder, and to whom the accounts are submitted monthly."

"Ah! well, as a matter of fact, he is of course correct. We do not take money from newspaper-men. Your editor wrote us, when you came, to treat you well, and we have tried to do so. If you have any fault to find, let me have it."

"I have no fault to find with the hotel. I have very serious fault to find with the compromising conduct you have pursued with me. I insist on having a bill rendered for all the time I have been in your house, and for every item supplied me. I never dreamed that the bills were not paid."

"But, my dear sir, don't you understand that, as business men, if we didn't profit by our policy with the press, we wouldn't persue it? Just look at the matter. The company could well afford to pay you handsomely to come here every season, if you would write such letters as you wrote this summer. Why, sir, the effect was felt within ten days. Your very greenness, if you won't be offended, was the great beauty of the letters. You saw things as no one else had ever seen them who wrote from here. Why, my young friend, it was worth ten thousand dollars a month to have you in the house, to satisfy the guests who asked about 'Valedo,' the correspondent. We had thousands of copies of the 'Minerva' sent over the country; we had every principal paper in the rich towns copy your letters, and, sir, you have made this hotel. I'm free to say it, sir, you have made this hotel, and, instead of paying a penny here, we should be in your debt if we gave you a check for five thousand dollars this minute."

"You are very kind, Mr. Mauger, to look at the matter in this flattering way. But others don't."

"What do you mean—what others? Who has the impudence

to meddle with the matter? I don't care if it is Statenbelt himself, he'll walk out of this house!"

"You don't quite understand me, Mr. Mauger; a journalist can't respect himself, and receive indirect wages in this way. The people who talked of it were quite justified in calling me a—a—never mind what, if I knowingly receive bounty in this way. You are extremely kind. You can do me no greater favor than to give me the amount that I am indebted to the hotel, and let me pay it this instant. I can't sleep. I can't look any one in the face till this is done."

The host eyed the publicist in amazement, and burst out:

"Why, young man, I've been in the hotel business thirty years, and I never knew such a thing as a correspondent paying a penny. It isn't right. You do us a thousand-fold more good than we can pay for. Why, I know hotel men that buy interests in newspapers to get the free use of their columns. Why, damn it, man, I'd hire you myself, and pay for your letters as advertisements, sooner than have you quit! I'll make the proposition now, this minute, and put it in writing, to pay you twice per week what the 'Minerva' pays you, and publish your writings at so much a line, if the editor objects to the arrangement. But he won't; for he comes here every season, and he never asks to pay his bill, nor is it ever presented him."

Fred rejected this generous proposal, and declared his intention of quitting the hotel at once. The bill was given him in the end. He was a good deal astonished at the amount, as it exceeded by a large amount his earnings. The host made a last effort.

"Here it is, receipted—say no more about it; consider the money as so much earned from us and very gladly paid."

Fred handed him a check for the sum, and gave notice that he should vacate his room in the morning. He found an agreeable lodging in a secluded part of the town, and by noon was installed in his new quarters. The next afternoon, a note, inviting him to dine with the Grimstones and drive afterward, written by Eleanor, was forwarded from the hotel. He sent a polite refusal. An hour later, as he sat at his window, Mrs. Circester drove up and sent a card in. It was a request for him to come for a drive.

"What new madness has seized you now? I was in Nell's room when your note came; we couldn't understand the address, and sent to the office to inquire. They told us you had quit the hotel. What does it all mean?"

"It means that I can't afford ten dollars a day when I only receive fifty dollars per week," and then Fred told the whole story. She listened with little ejaculations of disgust, and commented:

"The scandal-mongering young cads! Do you know that Herbert has paid Raikes's gambling debts, and lent Romeyn money to remain here? Do you know that those fellows get all their clothing from fashionable tailors for the custom they send them? Do you know that they bribed the jockey at the last three races to disable their own horses? Do you know that Dominguez has Herbert's bills for two thousand to fit up 'the Rest' of that odious creature, Beauxjambes?"

"And these are the manners you want me to imitate?"

"Not at all. These people play the principal part in the life of our time, and, to get a chance, you must keep on terms with them."

"That is to say, when you fall among thieves, you must make believe to be a thief too, in order to take advantage of the honor that exists among them?"

"That's your pungent journalistic way of stating the case, and perhaps it isn't far wrong; but, right or wrong, you can't afford to make enemies of the Grimstones. You can make Nell something else, if you will turn your hand over, and I'm not a person easily deceived in matters of this sort."

Fred laughed. The persistence of his patron, which had at first annoyed him, began to be rather soothing to his vanity; for there never was a saint in the form of a man that wasn't secretly flattered by the thought that he might inspire a passion if he set himself to try. Mrs. Circester, however, would have been quite as much surprised as chagrined had she been in the Grimstone parlor at that very moment. The family had received a telegram from New York, from the head of the house, announcing his immediate coming, and he arrived in the afternoon. He barely took

time to remove the dust of the hot August journey, when he summoned Mrs. Grimstone to a conference. She was in no sense afraid of her husband, little sympathetic as they were ordinarily, but the hectic roses faded, or rather the pallor under them intensified, when, in a tone of cold curiosity, Grimstone asked:

"What is this folly I hear about Nell and that fellow Hilliard?"

"What about them, my dear? I know no nonsense, I'm sure."

"Dorr tells me that he can't get a chance to pass the time of day with Nell; that Hilliard is with her all day, and up to the latest hour at night."

"It's possible—Nell is here for pleasure; she enjoys Hilliard, and he seems to enjoy being with her, and I'm sure it is very satisfactory to have her in the company of a man so well bred—the leader in the best society of New York."

"Don't talk that rot, Delia! Best? A lot of smirking hypocrites that hold their doors barred until they can verify your bank-account! However, that's neither here nor there. Dorr has the notion that Nell is the woman he wants to marry. I took care to ask her, before I gave him any definite reply. She said she was indifferent; that if I cared to have it so, she would marry him; and for a time she gave him every encouragement. On the strength of that, we have joined forces in a number of enterprises, the success of which demands the devotion of some one who is not a stranger to me; some one who is joined by ties stronger than mere interest; some one, in short, who may justly hope to be working in his own behalf as well as mine. Dorr is a fine-looking fellow; he is not more than forty; he will not make a showy husband, but he will give Nell such a place as no other woman on this continent can dispute—the command of fifty million dollars!"

"Well, I'm willing to have Nell make the match, but my say so wouldn't influence her a particle; nor will yours, if she has made up her mind not to have him."

"Send her here—we'll see," and the million-maker looked at his wife in mingled wonder and surprise. Nell came rustling in presently, a vision of loveliness, covered with fleecy laces, and no color anywhere, save on the lustrous cheeks and in the languishing

eyes. She came up to her father frankly, pulled his head down and kissed him, and forced him into an easy-chair, where, sitting on the arm, she could look down in his face. Then, affecting the sepulchral tones of the tragic persons on the stage:

"This is the cruel parent that would give his only daugh—ter to an abhorred suitor! Look at him—see the crime in his face! What should be done with him? He shall be kissed into penitence, and locked in my lady's chamber."

"No—no—Eleanor, you spoiled vixen; you're not wheedling diamonds, or a drag, or any of the monstrous and wasteful things that have ruined your poor father," and he tried to extricate himself from the caressing arms—she only laughed at this.

"Yes; I shall wheedle everything from you, even your cross temper!"

"Seriously, Nell, I know you think too much of your word, and you have too much love for me, to place me in such an awkward position with Dorr. The truth is"—he rose, hesitated, and closed the door—"the truth is, Nell, Dorr can cripple me badly if I gave him cause for anger just now. What can you say against him? He's not as young as he might be, but he's fine-looking; he isn't sentimental, but I've no doubt he'll make a very good husband. Besides, what do you care, if you have all the money you want, and all the social consideration his millions will give you?"

Nell's face had lost the vivacious audacity of the first moment she entered. Tears stood in her large, lovely eyes, and she leaned against the back of the chair her father sat on, with her hands hanging down straight behind her, working nervously in each other:

"Papa, I am to blame in letting you think for a moment that I could ever consent to marry Mr. Dorr! Let us dismiss that. It is decided. I will tell him that the fault is mine, and if he has any sense of magnanimity he will bear you no ill-will. He doesn't need our fortune, and I certainly don't need his! Haven't we millions? You are referred to in every journal one takes up as the millionaire, and aren't you rated as worth anywhere from ten to fifty millions? What have you wasted your years for, if these millions can't give you independence? What do you want with

Dorr's? What could you do with more if you had them? I can't spend the allowance you make me! I have given it away for years. I hate the very name of million. I could almost wish you were reduced to a few hundreds; I'm sure you would be happier, and we should see more of you. Why, papa, do you know that the gardener at Valedo is a far happier man than you, and his family circle is a scene that I have envied and cried over many a time? No, I will never marry a man who has the craze of money! It is worse than opium, it is worse than crime; for these may be cured without killing, but this dreadful mania can't!" She bent over, wound her arms around his neck, and broke into choking sobs. The two natures, each wrought into passionate purpose by opposing motives, melted into the tender calm of filial and paternal love.

"Do you—that is, have you any one else in mind that you want to marry—or rather that you would marry?"

"O papa! that—that isn't a question I can very well answer!"

"You can certainly say whether you love any one else than Dorr!"

"I can't say that, papa; because that's a question a girl can answer only when the man that loves her has asked it!"

"Is there any man you know that would get a yes to the question?"

"I can't tell until he asks—perhaps yes, perhaps no."

"Nell, you ought to have some confidence in your father. God knows, I've shown enough in you since the day, twenty-two years ago, when you lay, a little sprawling, crying midget, in the cradle at Valedo! I will put the question in another way—yes, bury your head quite close to my heart; it is a very true heart to you, my child," and he stroked the hair tenderly as she sank on her knees on the stool beside the chair. "Let me, now that you have a refuge for your blushes, ask this: if I name the man you would marry, will you answer yes?" He waited, bent over and kissed the head, and still waited. But there was no answer. "Don't you think this is a little hard for me, my child? You will tell a stranger what you can't tell your own father? I am hurt, deeply hurt."

She clasped his neck closer, her cheeks were burning, and her breath came in agitated gasps. Both were silent for a long time; at last, Nell, looking up timidly, saw his eyes fixed on the ceiling, and then she whispered:

"I think he wants to ask me, but he hesitates, because—because—" she hesitated again, and buried her burning cheeks on her father's breast—"because—"

"Because what, Nell? because he fears that you will say no?"

"Ah, papa, no, no!"

"Why, then? Most lovers are eager to learn their fate!"

She pulled his head down and whispered in his ear, with burning lips:

"He knows I would say yes."

He put her gently away and got up. She looked up in a fright. But his face was serene, even benignantly indulgent:

"My child, I will say no more; of course you can not be constrained, and if there is a man you love who asks you to marry him, he must be a fit person, or you wouldn't encourage him. I will say no more, but, until your preference asks you, treat Dorr as kindly as you can, for my sake. Surely, that isn't asking much!"

"O papa, how good you are to me!" and when presently the door opened and her mother came in, father and daughter were sitting in close embrace.

CHAPTER XIII.

MY DUCATS OR MY DAUGHTER?

AARON GRIMSTONE did not quit Saratoga at once, as he had at first proposed. He told his daughter that he would stay a while to get acquainted with his family, even though the indulgence should invite the wolf to the door. Nell understood something of the grim significance of this saying, which was lost on her mother. The girl knew that her father was waiting to see the man that she had a yes ready for, and she resolved that he shouldn't. To his great surprise, she was not at home when Hilliard sent up his card,

that day, nor the next, nor for a week. Neither did she appear in the dining-room, nor the dancing-room, nor the promenade. Late every evening she drove out with her father and mother, and sometimes Dorr was in the landau.

This strategy, which Eleanor had determined on for keeping her father's suspicions from Hilliard, had an effect which she could not have produced had she deliberately counted on it. Hilliard had for months asked himself whether he ought to marry this girl, who for him had no other attraction than her father's millions. He was in no sense a vulgar fortune-seeker. He had reflected long and deeply on the seriousness of the marriage-contract. He preserved enough of the sentimentality of his boyhood to seek in his wife the companion of his heart, his aspirations, his better impulses. He scrutinized his sentiments and impulses as closely as the metaphysician, who buried himself in a cell to prove, by a mental vivisection of his own intellectual organism, the logical formula, "I think, therefore I am." He was as conscious of the time that he had passed the boundary that conscience erects against worldliness and spiritual infidelity, as the mariner whose lead shows the point where the ship rides over the bar. He knew how far his moral decadence had gone, but he was so completely master of himself that he still believed he could resist going with the tide. He had sacrificed many ideals when the craze for money overwhelmed him, but he meant that the passion should never swirl him into the maelstrom of ignoble self-abasement he witnessed in others. He had hoped and tried to make himself believe that sentiment, and the sacred fire that lights the altar of love, were urging him toward Eleanor. But the more he saw her, the clearer her nature revealed itself, the more certainly he saw that she was not the ideal of his youth.

He felt a very sincere affection for her, he even felt a sort of chivalrous compassion for so gentle a nature left at the mercy of the designing; for, like all who saw her, Hilliard believed her impulsive and weak, as the impulsive are. Her very frankness was pitiable artifice to him. He believed that the open preference she showed for him was an unrefined coquetry, and that she would probably repulse him if he came to her with all that he had to

offer, the shadow of a lover's adoration. He at once overestimated and underestimated her. Insincerity has this weakness always, that it has no sure measure to gauge conduct or motives abstractly. He knew that his social vogue and pre-eminence in letters dazzled the girl; he never dreamed that her delight in his company was a *naïve* confession of her fondness for him. His own dissimulation blurred the lenses through which he observed her, and, perfect master as he was of all the small arts of social diplomacy, he was really helpless in Nell's hands had she but known it.

Her belief we have seen in her artless confession to her father. She had created an ideal, or rather she had made Hilliard the ideal of her girlish dreams. He was a creature of poetic refinement; he loved her, but shrank from admitting it, lest his motive should be misunderstood. He distrusted her magnanimity, and she waited in delicious hope for the time when she should surprise him into an avowal, and then tell him that she had seen into his pure soul from the first! It had been her dream for months; for days she had planned and schemed to give him the chance; often she thought the rapturous words on his lips; a thousand times she had seen them in his eyes. But something had always come between the divine thought and the diviner utterance. The delay only gave her firmer faith. She lived in an atmosphere of such ecstasy as comes in complete abandonment to the ideal. The birds warbled the tender words as she opened her window; the stars sent them thrilling into her soul in letters of light; the sun shone them, the waters rippled them. By day and by night she heard them; she knew they would come, and she waited in the fervent certainty of the bride at the altar.

This very certainty, which transformed the maiden tremors that mark first love into a sort of coquettish invitation, wholly deceived the schooled diplomate, who counted on the timidities that usually mark the tender love of a girl. He fancied that she was emphasizing her indifference to him, even while she was glowing and fainting in expectation of the signal.

The sudden change, marking the father's coming, confirmed him in this belief, and he laughed in a sort of expiatory bitterness over his own just punishment.

He was sitting on the veranda late in the afternoon, debating whether he should leave for the mountains, when Nell appeared in the vestibule in walking-costume, just as her father drove off with Dorr and Herbert. "I am going for a walk. Have you anything better to do? If not, come with me?"

"Barring obeying a command from the archangel to appear at the gate of heaven, with the list of one's sins blotted out, I know nothing that would give a man a greater pleasure." He was accustomed to paying her this exaggerated hyperbolean sort of homage, and, inconsistently enough, it was one of the things he liked least in her that she seemed to accept them with pleasure; while, as a matter of fact, she disliked them exceedingly, but supposed that men of genius commonly expressed themselves in this fashion. She stood for a few minutes adjusting her gloves, meanwhile glancing up the street where the Grimstone landau rolled off out of sight until it turned the corner.

She stepped briskly forward, going toward the park, but avoiding the paths toward the spring. She was all animation; indeed, her vivacity was too exuberant to be natural, and Hilliard insensibly realized a feeling of satisfaction that he had relinquished all thought of asking her to marry him. As his thoughtfulness deepened, her spirits became more and more buoyant. She thought him timid; he thought her frivolous, indelicate, repulsive. She thought him confounded by the opportunity within his reach; he thought she was insolently flaunting the confidence she had in herself, and his own inconsequence to her. It is a scene in the human comedy, old enough and threadbare enough, I fancy, but always full of the delight of the unknown and unforeseen to the poor, pranking comedian—a diversion that breaks hearts and ruins lives, and all the more pathetic that one is sincere and the other a sham.

She had passed a miserable week, she chattered; she hadn't seen a soul she cared for, and she looked at him with an arch-invitation that fairly made him recoil. Her "papa had dragged her hither and yon; he had kept her prisoner in-doors; he was jealous if she remained an hour with her maid to dress; and finally wouldn't have the family dine down-stairs, in order that they might

see as much of each other as his stay would permit. He was the dearest, most unreasonable of papas, and she adored him; there was nothing he refused her; she believed that, if she asked him to go on a journey around the world, he wouldn't refuse to get the tickets." This was what she said, and here is what she thought: "The dear fellow, he needs to be encouraged; he is trembling, I can see he is! he is afraid that papa will say no! I will show him how I can turn papa around my finger! He is silly as that poor Carew, who told me he never would marry a girl with money, because his motives would be misunderstood. This dear fellow is even more sensitive. He is too poetic even to say in words the bar he feels between us. But I will show him that money is a small thing to me, compared with a prince like him for a lover!"

It may be that this double operation made Nell's speech less comprehensible than she intended, for Hilliard, who was not called on to reply, save in rare monosyllables, carried on these reflections: "How could I ever think of such a union? She is really coarse, childish, tedious; what earthly interest have I in that disreputable old Plutus? what do I care whether he indulges her to indiscretion or not! Heavens! think of this woman presiding over my house, meeting the only people congenial to me! Ugh! I must have been an idiot! But how handsome she is! how distinguished her carriage! how she would out-bloom the pale inanities of the ordinary *salon* with her natural carnation, her limpid, lovely eyes! Even the coarse bones are a beauty! How honest and unartificial!" Happily, the face of the *ingénue* was as impenetrable a mask as the face of the diplomate; both stood within a word of a common destiny, and both were divided by the abysm of delusion on one side and hypocrisy on the other.

They had, meanwhile, walked far from the village, along the edge of a wooded field. They crossed at a turnstile and sauntered along the hedge—Nell gathering white daisies and fastening them in her waist. Coming presently to a clump of golden-rod breaking into bloom, she snipped off a spray, and, fastening it in Hilliard's lappel, said, gayly:

"It is the color of deceit, but when deceit is so beautiful who cares to resist it?"

"Truly, who cares?" he echoed, absently.

They walked on until the field ended in a cross-road. There was a great chestnut-tree fallen across the fence, its limbs still green. Nell ran venturesomely up the trunk, until she was some distance from the ground, calling gayly to Hilliard to follow. He was just about to do it when the limb upon which she was leaning gave way. She uttered a little startled scream and fell, clinging to the limb, leaving the red sun-shade flaring among the branches."

"Let yourself drop! Have no fear—I will catch you!" In spite of herself, she dropped, for her strength gave out. Hilliard caught her in his arms, and asked quite equably if she were hurt. Affronted by this imbecile ineptitude in the face of such a chance as a lover's dream could alone invoke, Nell broke from him and sat down on the root of the tree, pretending to examine the wounds in flesh or raiment. Hilliard, greatly perplexed by this new phase, threw himself lengthwise at her feet, and waited for her to report progress.

Her thought was: "Well, it's plain that men have no confidence in themselves. I should have kissed a girl, if she fell into my arms like that, if I were a man!" What she said was: "Unless you broke a bone in receiving the shock, there's no harm done! I only tore my skirt! Do you like chestnuts?"

"No; they make known to me what Carlyle found out by means of Caledonian cakes and porridge."

"Dear me! what a curious thing! What do they make known—are they, like the cardinal-flower, prophets of tragedy, luckless love, and all manner of dreadful things?"

"No; what I meant to say is that the chestnut is odiously indigestible."

"Ah! but they make delicious dishes of them in France, and the French aren't dyspeptics!"

"The French can make a palatable dish of sole-leather, while we can't make bread that the stomach can assimilate, though we use the best flour on the globe."

"Wait till you come out to Valedo, and I will set before you bread made by an old aunty from Kentucky, and you'll certainly

say it is lighter and better than the French roll. By-the-way, when are you coming to Valedo? We are going to be very gay there this winter. Your friend Mr. Carew is going to settle there and edit the 'Eagle.'"

"I shall be in Valedo during the winter some time. I'm booked for a lecture there before Christmas."

"Delightful! You must come to us—Herbert will be home, and you shall have such sleighing as you haven't seen since you were in Russia.—Oh, yes, speaking of Mr. Carew, what a charming fellow he is! Where is he? I haven't seen him for a fortnight!"

Now, the inconsequence of this speech is accounted for by the double operation going on in Nell's mind: while she was speaking her thoughts ran—"Now, if I can manage to tell him Carew's conversation about marrying, and then get a chance to say how thoroughly I disapprove of that view of the matter, surely he will find courage."

"You are charmingly kind to ask me, and I shall be proud and honored to accept. Carew has retired to the seclusion of a boarding-house; he found hotel-life interfered with his Muse. He's a man with a conscience, and puts as much soul in his letters to the 'Minerva' as another would in an epic poem or love-song."

Eleanor, with a gliding, unobtrusive motion, slid down from the root, and, as she began plucking the fragrant clover, said:

"He is a poet, that young man. He has the strangest notions. He once told me that he would never marry a girl who had money, even if he were certain she loved him. Such fudge! Did you ever hear anything so absurd?—as though it were a girl's fault, if her family happened to have a lot of paltry money! I've no patience with him, and I told him so."

"Did you convince him?" There was a startled look in Hilliard's eyes, a vibrating tremor in his voice, that rang like the echo of silver bells in the ears of the siren.

"No; he's a most obstinate fellow: I believe that he would let a girl ask him, and refuse—the most odious selfishness a man could be guilty of." Now under these commonplaces ran these two opposing currents:

Over the fibers of Hilliard's consciousness these thoughts took shape: "Is she trying to make a fool of me? 'Gad! what beauty there is in her eyes! She is even trembling, her eyes are averted, she is putting the stems together all awry—she is agitated; can this fable mean anything? Good God! can it be that I have been misconstruing her—am I to take this as a lowering of the scepter, and kiss the hand? She is really lovely, and I could form her. Millions in the scale would justify anything, even love: I could love her—I could love her—I will love her—I do love her—I will risk it!"

Her thought, confused and roseate with the rising sun of realization dazzling the eyes of her sense: "He understands, he appreciates my self-sacrifice; his poetic soul comprehends that it's no indelicacy. He looks the lover, he is the lover, he makes me tremble—I dare not look at him! Heavens! am I to win this divine grace—this noble life—this perfect love? He loves me! I feel it—I see it—he is going to speak, and I must not go any further!" Her hand had wandered far out in vague reach for a white-topped clover. His hand was there, and they came together. He raised it to his lips and kissed it. Their eyes met; words that would have been irrevocable were on his lips; vows that would have bound them were formed, when a crashing in the leaves startled them. Turning their heads at the same instant, they saw Herbert looking on in amazement. He came almost to them and stopped.

"Nell, father has hurt his arm badly; the horses sheered down the road, and he was thrown against the wheel. He wants you to come to him.—There is plenty of room in the carriage for you also, Mr. Hilliard!"

Nell gave him a tender look of entreaty, and they silently walked to the carriage, which was concealed by the foliage of the fallen tree. The explanation of the untimely apparition was this: Grimstone had gone but a mile or two from the hotel when he remembered a telegram that he had left on his dressing-table, intending to give it to his valet to take to the office. The valet was out at the moment, and its neglect flashed on him as he was driving. As he entered the hotel, he heard some one ask for Hilliard, and the

response that he had just walked toward the spring with Miss Grimstone. He got the telegram, asked Dorr to wait in the hotel, and set out in chase. Herbert, meeting an acquaintance, came upon the track of the wanderers. The carriage had actually passed the covert once, and it was only by accident that Herbert caught sight of Nell's tell-tale sun-shade in the limbs of the chestnut. The accident was, of course, a *ruse de guerre*. Grimstone made very merry over his lame wrist, which he let his daughter nurse as they drove home. He was full of interest, for Hilliard asked him all sorts of respectfully solicitous questions about his career in New York, until the light heart of Nell took pinions more ethereal than bird-wings to fly in the horizon of her new happiness. Arrived at the hotel, Grimstone waved Hilliard a cordial adieu, and strode up the stairs on his daughter's arm.

He was very gay with her, chatted on all sorts of delightful frivolities; told her of a project he had for getting her a yacht, in which she was to be captain, and invite all her friends on a pleasure-jaunt. He refused to have his hand dressed, but consented to the tender ministry women love, and was lulled in the fashion of the most dove-like and unpremeditating patriarch, soothed by the devotions of the domestic circle. Presently, catching Mrs. Grimstone's eye, he made a signal for her to withdraw. He redoubled his sallies and convulsed his daughter with laughter; as she bent over to kiss him in the effusion that came from another sentiment than filial love, he drew her on his knee.

"There, I love to have you here, and I am almost selfish enough to ask you to always be my daughter."

"But I shall always be your daughter—how absurd!"

"Ah! when *he* asks you?"

"When he asks me, I shall tell him that, in taking me, he must take a father, too. Dear, dear papa. don't you fear!"

Ah, poor child! How could you see into that father's heart —how could you guess the misery that guileless confession, "when he asks me," was to bring on you and yours? How could you, in sight of the stars, dream that you were stepping into the abyss? It is the good in us, don't you see, that leads us to the door of darkness. It is the hand of those that love that smites in the

vitalest part. Ah! well, let us wait before we moralize. There are some tragedies that are their own moralizing.

An hour afterward, Hilliard, in response to "Mr. Aaron Grimstone's compliments" and polite request, met him in his private parlor. As he entered, Herbert, with a cordial greeting, passed out of the room, and the door closing he was left alone with the millionaire. Unsuspicious of what was coming, Hilliard took the seat proffered him with the tranquil composure of a man of the world, who knew what was due a father-in-law *in posse*.

"I have taken the liberty of asking you to come to me, sir, because I am an older man than you; and what I have to say can, perhaps, be said better within reach of references than it could in a public place. I beg your attention for a few moments." He hesitated, lolling back in his chair, twirling his glasses, and considering the next words. His voice was no longer cordial; he was now the man of business, the self-made man, the guardian of millions, the head of a dynasty—like Napoleon, when he had summoned Jérôme to persuade him of the folly of his American marriage.

"You contemplate, I believe, Mr. Hilliard, doing me the honor of asking my daughter in marriage?" Hilliard was prepared for any form of interrogatory than this. What did the question mean? He had been revolutionized within the hour. Millions would make Eleanor a very desirable wife. What, after all, were his dreams of the woman he wanted? Certainly Nell was, if not beautiful, very handsome, and, under his supervision and the influences with which he would surround her, material easily transformable into such a woman as the most fastidious æsthete need not shiver over. But there was no time now for hesitation. He was no longer at liberty to deliberate. Though he had not asked the question, or told her in so many words that he loved her, his eyes must have told her that he wanted to, and he was sure that hers told much more. He answered in a low tone, "I had intended, Mr. Grimstone, to ask for that honor, when authorized by your daughter."

"Yes, I supposed as much. Here is what I have to say: My daughter has been engaged for some time to a gentleman whom

I approve very heartily. By her own consent, he has been paying her the attentions of an accepted suitor. I hold that engagement sacred. Should she break it and marry any one else, she will take that step in defiance of my wishes, and she will not get a penny of my fortune. Here is the disposition I have made of my estate in the contingency of my daughter's disobedience." He rose, and going to a drawer in the tray of his traveling-chest, drew out a paper and proffered it to Hilliard.

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Grimstone—I don't see how this concerns me! It certainly does not interest me."

"Yes, yes, I see—it's not my daughter's fortune you want; well, then, it will be just as well for you to know what this document has to say. It provides by bill of sale for all my estate, except my wife's and son's portions. In the event of my daughter's marriage without my consent, she will be left in very moderate circumstances—not by any means such circumstances as would tempt a man like you to link your fortunes with a family that you hold in contempt. Ah! I know quite well what I am saying. I know perfectly your estimate of money-bags, and I infer the attraction such a man's daughter would have for refinement and accomplishments like yours. Millions might cover her deficiencies as your wife; but, as your wife, mark my words, she will never have them! I shall make no scandal, insist on no public estrangement. I shall simply guard my own even from my own."

Hilliard arose, but, with a wave of the hand, Grimstone held him, and continued tranquilly: "I will be frank with you, sir. I know your history; I know the first money you made in New York—I know how it was invested; and I know your tastes and ambitions. Marry my daughter, and you shall never occupy a post of distinction on any journal in the country. I have the record of the speculation in Ontario with Winkle, while you were on the 'Atlas,' calculated to a fraction; your relations with the agent that made the investment in the railway grab. In short, sir, I am determined to proceed to any length to compel my daughter to keep her word to the man she is engaged to. On the other hand, if, as a man of honor, you retire from any further pretensions to my millions, I may venture to say that, with such abilities

as yours, I can put you in the way of making a fortune not burdened with a wife, that, after all, might not meet the needs of a nature so refined as yours, for, all told, you know we are the most vulgar type of the new-made rich. I am not, you see, even equal to the hackneyed French phrase. I believe that I have laid the situation before you. I will give you time to reflect, and you can write me, or come and say what you determine to do." He had moved toward the table as he spoke, and as Hilliard, white and trembling with indignation, wrath, and humiliation, strove to speak, Grimstone touched a bell, and Herbert, who had apparently been standing on guard at the door, entered.

"Herbert, give Mr. Hilliard some wine; there's brandy on the buffet there," and, without another word, he opened the door communicating with his sleeping-room, and closed it after him with emphasis.

CHAPTER XIV.

"LOVE TOOK UP THE HARP OF LIFE."

SPECULATING upon this frightful episode in Prince Rupert's career, I have often amused myself with making a parallel of the fantastic freaks that it used to please that behemoth of all the *parvenus*, Napoleon I, to play with the monarchs of Europe! When he sent for kings to come to his tent, or his cabinet, in their own capitals, he was fond of reminding them, as Grimstone reminded Hilliard, of their superior pretensions, their disdain for his merely self-made grandeur. Figure to yourself the Hohenzollern king, separated but one reign from the Great Frederick, when, after Jena, Napoleon kept him waiting like a lackey in his antechamber! A king is but a man, after all, as we hold in this land of equality; and Frederick of Hohenzollern, rallied on his pretensions, his divine right, and all that was antagonized by the acrid humorist of French democracy, retired from the presence of his dreadful master no more startled, crushed, nor broken than our aspiring and indomitably self-confident paladin of the press.

Indeed, the dull Hohenzollern was incapable of the acute sense of abasement that made the young man's self-loathing and wretchedness the torturing misery of self-condemnation. For, after all, when Frederick bent to the *parvenu's* yoke, he accepted it as the fortunes of war, and possessed no refinement of feeling, no quick conscience to reproach him with bringing about his own overthrow through ignobly prostituted power. So that, after all, the Hohenzollern at Jena, the Hapsburg at Austerlitz, Ferdinand at Bayonne, while as parallels they may adorn the tale, do not really help to point the moral; for they were degraded, *déclassé*, as kings may be, without strain upon anything else than wounded pride. With Hilliard it was a moral collapse, because he knew that it was deserved. He knew that it was an inscrutable process of expiation forced upon him by his own abandonment of principle and manliness. That morning he could have met Grimstone and laughed in his face over such imperious vaunting as he had made. That morning he could have said, "No, the thought of such an honor as an alliance with your family is not in my mind." He could have said it with truth; for, as we have seen, the week's interruption in his intercourse with Nell had strengthened him in his wavering resistance to the luring millions.

He had held himself as a creature of such a serenely superior atmosphere to this monstrous autochthon; he had so fastidiously shrunk from giving the gold of his refinement to mingle with the alloy of Grimstone's coarseness. He had reached such an elysium of sensual exaltation when the scene in the field presented the sale of his soul as a sacrifice to an honest love! He was guiltless in the creation of the conditions which had brought him to the abyss.

The woman had tempted him, and he had fallen; and now—now he was shut out of the paradise of his own self-respect; denied the only distinction that consoles intellect and capacity in the ignoble worship of wealth and place! He was degraded to the money-maker's level, without the lofty consciousness of being able to despise it. He was himself to feel the mysterious power of that potent hierarchy that he himself had been helping to enthrone. No workman in all Grimstone's vineyard was more helplessly at his mercy. His Satanic insight had followed the five-

thousand-dollar check. He (Grimstone) knew that the fortune that enabled Hilliard to maintain himself independently of his profession was due to the despised and contumeliously rejected bounty! And now he contemptuously set his own estimate on the man who, pretending to spurn his money, had shiftily made use of it, and then given it back! The sting and sore of it all was, that he now stood in Grimstone's sight a creature with his own impulses and aims, but clumsy in applying means to ends.

"It is to me," Grimstone may now say, "it is to me you owe the means to live in the luxury your fastidious refinement craves. My money gave you your outfit; my good-will can continue it; my anger can strip you of it. I am quite willing to throw you chances to enrich yourself, just as I would any other pushing intriguer; but, give you my daughter?—she is for your betters!" That was the maddening thought that burned and bubbled like sweltering venom in his brain, until he threw himself feverishly on the bed, and remained there for the day and night. But he must give the remorseless anarch an answer! Oh, if he could fly! If he could go where their mutual conditions were unknown! Why not go to the south of France, by the purple Mediterranean, where he had wandered and dreamed of the day that might come, when, cheered by a gentle spirit, he should take a villa at St. Tropez, where the dim coasts of Italy were shown in the morning haze, and the low lines of Spain in the dusky evening mirage?

Why not? He had money enough to live the simple life of the land: he could write; he felt the appetent faculties that under congenial conditions of repose bloom into the divine flower of romance and poetry. He would write fiction; he would gather the graces that he had heretofore embalmed in the perishing pages of journalism, and give himself a lasting name and fame in meditative philosophic fiction. Why not? He had the gift of expression, an analytic insight, keen, accurate, and lucid. He would give up all thought of shining in an atmosphere where putrescence passed for the genuine gleam of the alchemic forces. Such a life he might lead without the burden of this shame constantly brought to his mind. Remain? He would become the scorn, the puppet of the Killgores, the Dorrs, the Grimstones, the

oligarchy which secretly and nefariously interpenetrated every public employment, insidiously molded popular sentiment, and kept the masses debauched in false principles, false aims, and pernicious doctrines. What power he stood in the clutches of he knew by Carew's experience. If that blameless fellow could be brought to ruin, kept from the field of his best work, to what might they not reduce him (Hilliard), caught in the hideous trap of his own setting? The atrocious irony of it came when he confronted the two deeps of the dilemma. He might ignore Grimstone's threats, and marry Eleanor. The father's recourse to such odious means was a confession that Nell would be his for the asking: as to that, she had promised if ever woman had; but, ah! there the inexorable in the laws that follow the violation of our own consciences held him in a moral guillotine. Without money, Nell would be a millstone on the body of his life, holding him to the earth, and reminding him of his despicableness.

For, look you! Shudder as we may over the blood-curdling torture of our simple and benevolent ancestry, what iron virgin, clasping the naked body in her hollow bosom of spikes, is comparable to the torture that the refinement of the moral perceptions makes a man susceptible to, when, like Hilliard, he confronts his own abnegation of manhood? What were the three-feet-high and four-feet-wide torture-boxes of the Venice prison to a man like Hilliard, arrogant in his intellectual supremacy, held in the clammy arms of his own disembodied wraith? No arms to combat, no flesh to rend, no enemy to proudly face and calmly dare! He had himself taken out his heart and given it to the daws to peck and lacerate, and soil in their own revolting similitude. But marry Nell—live with her innocent eyes mutely asking him the meaning of his broken will, his occult bondage? See her day by day deprived of the luxuries which are necessities to the weak; for, of course, weak she must be, nurtured in the atmosphere of superficial humanities, veneered manners, and artificial morals.

Oh, he knew the herd of the money-maker! Untried and untempted, as the plaster is to the chiseled marble, capable of holding form and seeming grace, while undisturbed on their pedestals of egotism and plenty! If he only loved her; if he could have

been inspired by that glorious madness that makes the world well given for the heart we love—oh, then how he would have confronted this sordid old huckster, and spurned him in his moral squalor! Why had he descended from the serene atmosphere he had made for himself, to mix with this ignoble horde? He was happy in New York; he was adored where adoration was the incense of inspiration. He could have gained gold and love in a sphere congenial to his utmost dream of refinement. Ah, alas! he had stooped to the vulgar impulse of avenging the truculent benevolence of this sordid *parvenu*. He had counted on dazzling him by the exhibition of a standing and consideration which, with all his wealth, the Grimstone could not exact. Poor fool—when Grimstone himself gave the signal and measure of how far the eaglet was to fly! Now he was pulled down to earth with a maiming jerk; he could neither fight nor fly. He must abide patiently the will of this pitiless task-master!

These were the thoughts that he half uttered in the hateful seclusion of his chamber; underneath them ran a still turbider current, for there are very few of us who dare to be frank even with our own consciences. In these half utterances, there were special pleading, extenuation, conditions. But in the deep, deeper current that scorched and burned him, he knew that the baseness of his beginning was but the sin of omission, compared with the dastard act he had been resigning himself to. He pretended to believe that Nell's preference was a caprice; that his total eclipse in the orbit of her life would leave no darkness; that, bred in an influence where money was made the measure of every earthly joy, she would readily fall into her father's reasoning, and that her compliance would be based on the abdication of his manhood. Conscience rebelled in vain; cowardice and selfishness lured him further and further from the single act he was called upon to do. It was a long and torturing conflict between the vanishing moral forces and the cowardice of egotism.

All night and the next day he kept his room. What he could eat was set on his writing-table. Even when he thought the woful combat ended, he was not sure but physical death was preferable to the tainted moral reprieve he had decided to accept. He

denied himself to all his friends, and prepared feverishly to quit the place. His luggage was packed and tickets were taken for New York, when Blackdaw's card was handed him. He shrank from meeting his chief above every one else, but he couldn't refuse. The card said, "Must see you at once—a vital matter!" Blackdaw started when the ravages of forty-eight hours' mental conflict impressed on Hilliard's face met his eye.

"You are a sick man, Hilliard. It's madness for you to return to New York! Come to the mountains with me."

"Well, if you say so, I'll go. What was the matter you wanted to settle?" Hilliard sank wearily on the bed, and Blackdaw grew almost pale, or as pale as a tawny complexion can become. He walked the floor discomposedly a moment, then, pulling a chair quite near the bed where Hilliard was stretched at full length, with his hands clasped over his eyes, said, in a broken, hesitating way:

"You know, of course, that Grimstone, through Wexel, Harmon & Co., has a large interest in the 'Atlas.' He has been giving us a good deal of trouble since we opened fire on the rings at Washington. Well, we have been able to avert hostilities in the board by showing largely increased profits; but if anything should lessen them, we should be kicked out; even as it is we have been compelled to let up on some of the ring Senators, Killgore, Warman, and Balkin. They are interested in Treasury operations with Grimstone and Dorr. I only tell you this, to show you how much we are at the mercy of just the very men that we ought to be free to fight. We can't, and we must do the best we can. Now, I have received a letter from Grimstone, or rather, his son Herbert came and read a letter to me from his father, but didn't let it leave his hands. In that letter he tells me that it is for my interest and the 'Atlas' that you should be counseled into accepting a proposition he has made you, and which he leaves you at liberty to make known to me, or not, as you think best. I don't ask to know what it is; knowing Grimstone, and knowing you, I can guess, and I say frankly that you can't afford to contest any point in which Grimstone has taken ground against you. It sounds absurd, it sounds cowardly, unreal, whatever you please. You al-

ready know something of the power of these rich men—many of them in apparent antagonism, but all bound together in a sort of masonic bond, to crush men or measures that threaten their supremacy. You remember what happened in poor Carew's affair. I was helpless, though I knew him incapable of a dishonest thought. What will happen to you if you defy Grimstone? The 'Atlas' will be put into new hands. You will be refused admittance to such columns as you could write for with conviction. Innuendoes, damaging your social standing, and blasting your literary usefulness, will appear constantly in country papers, and be copied in New York, copied in the 'Atlas,' as a tacit explanation of your disappearance from its columns."

Hilliard had started from the bed and begun walking the room feverishly. He came over and put his hand on Blackdaw's arm. "All you say I know already; tenfold more than you say of the ulterior methods of these people I could tell you. I don't propose to contest anything with them. I propose to share the fortune they permit me. You may go to Grimstone and tell him that I withdraw all purpose of disputing him!" He laughed bitterly. "When we read of such a state of things as this in poor, old, prosing St. Simon, we wonder at the cravens who laid their necks down for the Grimstones of that day to walk on; but they were not, after all, as groveling and base as we are, for the men that sent them to the *cachots* of Vincennes or the Bastile were great nobles, king's sinister-barred sons, the *noblesse* in manners as well as money. 'Pon my soul, Blackdaw, such episodes as these, put in romance, would cover the author with derision, or force him to a foreign residence. Be it so! I will embalm what I know of these men in a fiction, and I will drive them out of covert! I will—"

"Yes, I've no doubt you could make a pretty tale of it all, but who would publish it? You couldn't get the title-page printed this side the water! Those who recognized the fidelity of the characterizations would shrink from offending a ruling caste; and those who didn't recognize their truthfulness in form and outline, would reject your work as revolutionary fustian, subversive of all the standards of modern taste. No, my boy, if you want to make money and win renown, write a tale apotheosizing callow Grandi-

sons, covert intrigue in married life, and the tea-table inanities of people of fashion; attenuate their mental processes, drown their follies in aromatic gush, and you have the synthetic school that modern æsthetic taste demands. No, your virile force and sequential plan would be out of place in the fragmentary art of to-day. It is for neat phrases and triturated sentimentality that novels are now written. A 'Vanity Fair' would be pronounced vulgar drivel by the canons that now rule. The realism of Dickens coarse and inhuman. Fiction now must be the reflex of the attenuated manners and false standards of the time. Sublimated reporting, in short, of the apings and insincerities of the regnant forces. No, Hilliard, you must leave novel-writing to the suave mediocrities who embalm insipidity and turn empty phrases with graceful ease. An idea or a plot of the old-fashioned Scott or Dumas sort would shut the door of publication to you." *

Ten minutes later, Nell looked up expectantly, as Blackdaw came into their private parlor with her father. She had been very happy and very miserable during the three days—happy in the question Hilliard's eyes asked during that brief intoxicating moment by the fallen chestnut; miserable because since then she had

* The editor of these pages joins the discriminating reader in abhorrence of this bitter gibing of the literary taste of ten years ago. As the historian of some of the episodes of that decade, influencing the destinies of the persons whose biographies we are studying, he is obliged to give such parts of their talk as best illustrate their character. A country, proud of such fiction as now adorns our literature, will listen with impatience to an insinuation that our novels, tales, and romances are the sublimated reporting of callow youth or dilettante travelers. A taste that has relegated Thackeray and Dickens to the garret can not be impugned even by critics in fiction. So the author begs the reader to estimate the above sentiments as the archaism of minds that no longer rule in critical matters. If further justification be needed, he will cite an authority that all schools will join in accepting—Père La Fontaine, who disavowed responsibility for repugnant sentimentalism in these quaint lines:

"Je chante les héros dont Esope est le père;
Troupe de qui l'histoire, encor que mensongère,
Contient des vérités qui servent de leçons.
Tout parle en mon ouvrage, et même les poissons:
Ce qu'ils disent s'adresse à tous tant que nous sommes;
Je me sers d'animaux pour instruire les hommes."

neither seen nor heard directly from him. Herbert had said casually at dinner, the day after the mute declaration, that Hilliard was confined to his room by a passing indisposition. Eleanor had hurried off and ordered a great basket of flowers, and sent them with her card, but no message. The servant was intercepted in the hall by Grimstone's valet, who took the basket back, saying Miss Grimstone had forgotten to send a note, and, paying the man, said he would deliver them himself. Later they were returned to Nell, with the message that flowers could not be kept in the sick-room.

So when Blackdaw came, the eager girl was fascinatingly cordial. He was Hilliard's closest friend; he had come to cheer him in his illness; he would have a message from her adored poet! She invents a dozen pretexts to get Blackdaw within reach of a whisper, but papa, without a sign of consciousness of the by-play, frustrated every tentative confidence. Presently she left them, and, slipping out into the corridor, began to walk up and down. When the door opened, she was going to fly to meet Blackdaw, but papa, pretending not to see her, accompanied the guest down-stairs and into the lobby. Tears of anger and terror were in her eyes as she hurried into her room, and threw herself on the bed, with her face pressed into the pillows. She lay there an hour, sobbing and sighing softly. She was sorely perplexed. Should she write?

Yes, she would write her beloved a little note, just a word to say how her heart was torn by the illness that separated them. She hurried to her writing-table and took out a small square sheet, with an engraved monogram and arms. But how should she begin? "Dear Mr. Hilliard"—no, that form didn't befit their present relations. "My darling"—she bent over and kissed the words, and then looked guiltily over her shoulder. No, he had never called her Eleanor; she dared not be first to lisp the endearing forms of love. She wrote "Dear Archy"—no, that wouldn't do; she pressed the paper to her lips, then blushed, and sobbed a little, gentle, longing sigh of timidity and yearning. The rejected forms were on separate slips, and, putting them in an envelop, she wrote on it A. H., and locked them in a drawer. How should she send him word? He must be in miserable health, he must be dangerously ill, or he would have sent some message. She would

bear the suspense no longer; she would send her maid to inquire, and he would send back a note. Delicious thought—a note; he would say, "Darling Nell." No, "My own darling Nell," "My Nell!" she began to sing it like a bird, "My Nell," as she rang for the maid.

"Molly," she said, when the girl came in, "I want you to find out Mr. Hilliard's room; go there and see him yourself. Don't be refused; push in if they try to stop you, and go to Mr. Hilliard, tell him that Miss Grimstone sends her kindest compliments, and wants to know if she can do anything for him, and give him this flower" (it was one of the white clovers she had gathered as she talked in the field). "Tell me just how he looks, and—and—everything—you know!"

"Yes, Miss Nell, I know," and Molly looked unutterable knowingness, and her mistress blushed and slipped a shining piece of gold into her apron-pocket, and then Molly looked still more knowing, and hurried out to carry the message. As she tripped out into the corridor, Mr. Grimstone's valet also stepped out, and, following her noiselessly, caught her arm just as she was raising her hand to knock on Hilliard's door.

"Molly, Miss Nell has changed her mind, and wants to see you a minute; she's in Mr. Grimstone's room."

Molly, without a suspicion, turned and retraced her steps. On reaching Mr. Grimstone's room that gentleman was alone, and Molly was about to go into her mistress's room, when she saw that Nell was not present; but, bidding the valet withdraw, Grimstone made a sign for the girl to remain.

"Molly, what were you going to Mr. Hilliard's room for?"

Now, if all the world loves a lover, the Celt adores him. Molly's honest heart was very warm in the interest of her mistress in love. It was doubly warm now that she saw an obstacle. When her master asked her business in Hilliard's room she saw why her darling had been sad and restless by turns, and with the readiness of the Irish nature and the wit of the Irish brain she answered:

"Sure, sir, Masther Hullyard tuk a buk belonging to Masther Harbart width 'im three days ago. 'Twas I tould him he was welcome til it, an' I heerd Masther Harbart ax fur it awhile ago,

an' I knew that Masther Hullyard wuz sick, an' I thought I'd slip in and git it, unbeknownst loike—"

How much further the honest girl would have perjured her immortal soul there is no means of telling, but she was spared any further improvisation in behalf of persecuted love by the entrance of Nell, who caught only the last words.

"That will do, Molly; you needn't go for the book again. Herbert can get along without it."

Molly, instead of quitting the room by the door she had entered, deliberately passed in front of her master, her eyes a perfect fourth of July of pyrotechnics, and signaling to her mistress to the purport that she need have no fear, her love was in good hands, and her secret not to be wrenched from her faithful Molly's heart by all the locomotive power of her father's railways. Nell didn't understand the scene in the least. She turned to follow Molly to learn the result of her message, when her father's voice arrested her. He had risen, and Molly was unable to give a clew. When she had quit the room, he closed the door and turned the key. Then, taking his daughter's hand, led her to the chair he had been sitting in, and, seating her on the padded arm, held her in a close embrace.

"My daughter, you are not treating your father right, you are not treating your family right. Don't you know that such conduct as yours will destroy you, pure as you are?"

"What conduct? what do you mean, papa?" and she sat upright at arm's length, devouring him with blazing eyes, half filled with tears.

"You promised to give me your confidence when the man you thought you loved asked you to marry him."

He waited. She turned her head away, and sighed drearily.

"Well, my child?—"

"I will tell you all when—when—it is settled."

"You mean by that, I suppose, that he has *not* asked?"

"He has not asked me."

"Well, then, Nell, where could your senses have been when you sent him flowers, when you sent your maid to his door with compromising messages?"

She flung his arms from her shoulder and stepped backward, looking at him fixedly.

"It is you who have come between us; it is you who have prevented his writing me; you, you have been watching me, and breaking my heart! O papa, how could you, how could you kiss me, and let me kiss you, with this cruel treachery in your heart? You have kept him from me three long, wretched days; you put away from me a love that I have been dreaming all my life to win!"

She could contain herself no longer, and the incoherence of the last words melted into piteous sobs as she sank heavily upon a couch, burying her face in the cushions.

"Listen to me, Eleanor: I have done none of these things you say. When I discovered that this young man Hilliard was the man you were interested in, I took measures to find out about him. What I learned convinced me that it was your fortune—ah! let me finish; you shall have proof, my poor girl, of all I say—I was convinced that it was your fortune he found the most attractive part of you. He was heard in New York satirizing me because I sent him a check for his service to us the day of the riot. He boasted of returning the check, but he never made known that, before returning it, he had made use of it in a speculation, and gained a very large sum of money by means of secret information, as well as by using the columns of his paper. My poor girl" (he sat down and put his arms tenderly about her waist as she knelt with haggard eyes fixed on his face), "I thought it best to deal fairly with him, and the day you walked in the woods I sent for him, showed him the disposition I had made of my property in case you married without my consent, and to-day he withdraws all pretensions to your hand. I would have spared you all this, but—"

He was talking to a dead woman. Nell swayed forward and would have fallen upon the floor if he had not caught her. There was water within reach, and her smelling-salts were at her girdle. He held her with implacable composure until she opened her eyes. She looked at him dazedly, wrinkling her brows in a fashion she had, then, suddenly recalling her senses, she staggered away from him.

"I don't believe a word you have said. They have lied to you; do you hear, father, they have lied to you!" Then, illogically: "What if he did satirize you for the check?—no wonder; you treated him like a lackey. I adore him for it! It was like him! It was the protest of a great soul, when he brought us out of danger, and you acted without delicacy in sending him money. As for that, who is there among the people we do most for, that doesn't sneer at mamma, and ridicule me? Ask Molly the things she hears from the gossip of our friends' servants. I won't give him up!" she burst out, starting to her feet, "I won't give him up, if I have to be his servant and live in a garret!—"

"My child, it isn't a question of your giving him up—he has given you up."

"I don't believe it! I don't believe it! it is a calumny—it is—"

"Remember, Nell, that I am now telling you something of my own knowledge; and such language is not becoming even in your excited state."

"Prove it! Show me a line from him!"

"He told it by word of mouth."

"Ah ha! you insulted him; you drew it from him in his anger at your odious suspicion."

"Nell—Nell!"

"I don't care. It is disobedient, unfilial. Remember what I have at stake. Why, father, this is murder; it is murder! it is nothing less. You measure your millions against my life; you do. I declare it!"

"Don't I tell you, Eleanor, that I made no objection to his marrying you? I simply showed him my will, and left him to do as he pleases. He pleases to look elsewhere for a wife."

"Still, even admitting this, it is my happiness against your millions. I would give all of them, yes, a million-fold over, for him. Will you refuse him to me; will you refuse to let me be happy? O father!" and she was at his throat, strangling him in a feverish embrace. "Be generous; be merciful; be just. Let me be happy! oh, my God! let me be happy. Don't make me live the life we see other women leading, who marry to mate fortunes, and not hearts. Oh, my father! think of the years be-

fore me: think of the little use these millions are to you, and how little they will be if doubled! Be my own father as you have always been, and let me have my sweetheart—"

There was a knock at the door, and Grimstone, with an evident relief from the trying ordeal, rose and opened it. It was his wife. She looked in wonder and alarm at Nell kneeling on the floor with her head bent over on the couch. Her husband merely said:

"Nell is very much disturbed; she ought to lie down—she needs rest. I will send the doctor."

Soothed by the mother's tender sympathy, and encouraged by the tears that mingled with her own, she told the dismal little comedy; and when the doctor came, he found them locked in each other's arms, Nell firmly refusing to have any of his ministrations.

CHAPTER XV.

"BE BUT SWORN, MY LOVE."

IF experience were really a lamp for our feet, how uneventful and humdrum our lives would be, and how unedifying the lives of those about us! The countries that have no history may be happy in the eyes of the economists, but how uninteresting they are to the Froudes, Motleys, and Carlyles! Mary of Scots, in her crimson petticoat, kneeling before the butcher in the dungeon of Fotheringay, is a woful picture that remains when we have forgotten the forty-five years of her rival's reign! The miserable James, discrowned, unkinged, pleading with the wherryman, remains in our minds, when the years of his high admiralty, and even the tranquil sorrows at St. Germain, fade! If one really profited by the experience of others, see how little of the heroic the madness and folly of men would contribute to human history!

Henry VIII would have had but one wife; for, if experience had been accepted as a warning, none of the seductive beauties that tempted his uxorious passions would have dared be charming as

they could! Mary of Scotland would have worn widow's weeds for her French husband, and gone to her grave with a crown. Elizabeth would have married Essex instead of beheading him. Bacon would have coveted the bays instead of lucre, and gone to his long sleep with only part of Pope's epitaph to paint him. Wolsey would have served his God with his heart and his king with his intellect, and found himself honored in his old age. Charles Stuart, heeding the lesson of British turbulence, would have laid his crowned head in the marble sarcophagus of Westminster, instead of the potter's field. Henry IV would have lived to crown the peasant's pot with the Sunday capon to a good old age, if he had taken counsel of the fate of the Valois kings. Galileo would have lived to correlate the laws of gravitation, if he had reflected on the result of intellectual temerity in an age of superstition; and Savonarola would have gone to sleep peacefully in the eternal sunshine of Fiesole, instead of the pyre in Florence, had he recalled the fate of over-zeal, and the methods of the Borgia.

Leo would have placated the vindictive sensibilities of Monk Luther, instead of driving him to the mania of revolt, and the exaltation of combat, had he reflected on what persecution wrought for the Galileans in the time of Tiberius. Cromwell would have made the republic mildly potential, instead of Puritanically intolerable, had he recalled the experiments of his Greek predecessors. George III would have soothed the anger of his excitable colonists, instead of waging war, had he remembered the fate of Rome's dominions under the later emperors. Frederick the Great would have bathed Voltaire in tears, which he had always at command, when he dismissed him, instead of the insult and contumely of his myrmidons, and would have been spared the humiliation of the philosopher's piquant portrait, had he recalled the gall of Ovid, and the satires of Suetonius! The men who defined human inalienalities in life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, would have secured them in the republic they founded, if they had been guided by the lessons of Numa, Tarquin, and the great Julius.

And mark how much history that would have saved—slavery, rebellion, and the anarchic specter of social convulsion which preceded the people's seizure of their inalienable rights in this repub-

lic! That Bourbon scape-goat, Louis XVI, would have made friends with liberty by advancing it as we see it advancing among us now, instead of distrusting it, and saved his own and his queen's head; Napoleon I, master of half Europe, would have enjoyed its possession, had he heeded the lesson of experience laid down by Montesquieu, that "*il était impossible même au plus habile, et au plus fort ambitieux de souveraines de fonder une monarchie universelle,*" without going back to Alexander, Charlemagne, and Philip II. It is the weakness, vanity, contradiction, and infidelity of men and women that make the study of their vicissitudes an entertainment, if not an instruction. Now, had Hilliard's life been guided by the Puritan principles of Fred Carew, he would have shrunk from the first step that led toward that inevitable moral abnegation which we have seen him called upon to ratify.

He would have been a happier man, but he would have afforded you and me no amusement in watching the phases of his gradual downfall. However, perhaps I am premature in calling it a downfall. He would, I know, be the most astonished of men to hear himself thus rated! The Yahoos, that Swift described, made no doubt of being the salt of the earth! I have met peasants in the wilds of Bohemia, fed on black bread and *Leberwurst*, who had a kindly compassion for the creatures unhappy enough to be born American! In the least altruistic conception of man's obligations and responsibilities, the situation in which Hilliard now found himself may be regarded as trying. To be baffled in an honest love, is hard enough for a constant soul to bear; but to be baffled in self-love, that's the cross that tries everything but the soul; for people who love in that way, I fancy, the soul may be dismissed as a factor in the diagnosis of the resulting suffering. When your body is pricked all over by the sharp points of briers, the wounds are for the time at least more painful than a serious stab. The scratches show more, and take as long to heal. Hilliard was literally scratched until every organ of sense hung in shreds, and the only cure he could look for came from the same cruel points that had torn him. It was literally all that was left to him, to imitate the wondrous wise man, and, by leaping into the same thorns, cure his wounds! Nor was it the smallest part of his wretchedness,

that time might bring less poignant pricking of his wounds, for, so long as his fate rested in Grimstone's hands, he would be the slave of an evil memory. Even should the ægis of Plutus cover a future of gold, he would curse its possession as the price of his relinquished manhood. But in all this morbid introspection there was no thought of Nell. Indeed, he couldn't imagine that she wasn't, in some sense, identified with the devilish ambush into which the father had led him, as he chose to think it. He never thought of her waiting the words that had not come from his lips, though the eyes spake them. He put off leaving Saratoga, and passed the days in long walks about the fields, which were in those days nearer the town than now.

Eleanor meanwhile had come to a resolution. She passed sleepless nights and weary days before her mind was quite made up. Her father's bald statement, that Hilliard had consented to give her up because she would be cut from the paternal will by marrying him, she didn't for a moment believe. No! her father had insulted him; had brought powers to bear which, though she only suspected vaguely, she knew were apt to be considered hard to resist. She had first thought of making Herbert a confidant, and dispatching him to Hilliard to arrange for a reunion, but she soon saw that Herbert was as violently opposed to Hilliard as her father.

After Molly's luckless embassy, she saw that any messages sent would only be intercepted. She might write and send through the post, but with her father's all-pervading influence with the Government officials, backed by Killgore, she had no confidence that the letter would reach its address, or, if it did, she couldn't be sure of an answer reaching her. She might write to Hilliard to come boldly—that she was ready to go to the ends of the earth with him; but, alas! she didn't feel that she could venture to write that, as, after all, Hilliard had never spoken a word of love. Indeed, she remembered with anguish that it was she who had led him on; had almost wrenched from him the one responsive look that had thrilled her with the joy of a declaration. Could she trust Betty Killgore? Yes, that was the only resource.

But how explain to Betty, without revealing the awkwardness

of her situation? She was really making advances to a man that had not declared himself! What if he really had resigned what he had never claimed? It was wofully perplexing, whichever way she turned. Ah, Carew! He was honest and honorable; he would keep her secret and ask no questions. She would write to him and merely ask him as a favor to leave a note with Hilliard, and bring her an answer. Yes, that was, after all, the predestined solution. She wondered that she hadn't thought of it before. She was all aglow now with the new hope. She could preserve all yet, before Hilliard was driven to something desperate. Poor fellow! he was doubtless despairing of her, believing that she had consented to her father's hideous conduct; she would convince him. Her note was written and dispatched by an hotel-boy. She stood by the window until she saw him quit the porch unmolested. Fred came over at once, and found Nell in the public reception-room, and in a joyous state of agitated cordiality, quite unusual, for she was always vivacious and perfectly self-poised.

"Now, Mr. Carew, I mean to give you a very strong mark of my esteem for you, of my confidence in your—your honor and—and silence. I want you to take this note to Mr. Hilliard, put it in his hands, and ask him if there is an answer. As the note is for Mr. Hilliard *only*, of course no one else *must* know of it, or see it, or even know who has written it."

"You may depend, Miss Grimstone, that exactly what you say shall be done. Shall you wait for an answer here?"

"No, I will be in my apartment all day, and I shall recognize your knock at our parlor-door."

Fred was neither astonished nor *intrigué* by the commission. He didn't quite comprehend why he should have been called in when there were other means at the lady's command to communicate even with a forbidden lover. But he knew Nell's sentimental nature, how she preferred the romantic methods in everything, and he entered into the affair with humorous alacrity, without a thought that there was anything very serious involved beyond a pretty variation of Nell's piquant self-assertion. On entering the hotel, he had seen Hilliard talking to the porter, and on going down asked that functionary where he was to be found. The man said

he had gone toward the Congress Spring, but, on seeking him there, Fred missed him, and hastened back to the hotel. It was very nearly the dinner-hour, and he hurried up to Hilliard's room without the formality of sending his card. In response to his knock an impatient voice, dry and unlike Hilliard's musical tone, bade him "come in." He was putting some articles in a portmanteau, and his trunks stood strapped and ready for removal.

He didn't look up at Fred's entrance, and when he did there was an expression of resentful impatience in his eye. He said, shortly:

"How d'ye do? You're a stranger over here."

"Yes, I don't get over here often now; I've come to deliver you a note, or I should not have ventured up unannounced; but, like the king's messenger, I am a chartered personage on this mission," and he placed Nell's note in the other's hand.

Hilliard had never seen Nell's writing, and did not recognize the superscription in the bold, masculine, graceful hand, with the letters sweeping in abrupt curves known as the English style. Had he suspected whence the note came, he probably would have turned away from the messenger to conceal whatever emotion its reading might cause. Unconscious of its purport or author, he tore it open, and at a glance trembled and turned ghastly pale. Fred, occupying himself in examining the lurid works of art that adorn summer hotels, did not see the quick flush and then the hideous pallor that drove the rich red color in waves up to Hilliard's temples. The note merely said:

"I am my own mistress, and I am waiting for you.

"ELEANOR GRIMSTONE."

Fred purposely kept his back to the reader, that he might indulge his lover's ecstasy unseen. He heard him sink into a seat, smiling softly to himself at this sign of felicity. He pretended to be immersed in the pink prints of impossible nymphs perched on velocipedes, spinning dizzily by the sea-shore, and had exhausted the whole art collection over and over again, and still the absorbed lover gave no sign of leaving his reverie. Fred was sure that he

had been there half an hour, when he finally turned. Hilliard sat dumb and motionless in the deep easy-chair, limp, woe-begone, dazed. He neither saw nor heeded the messenger—he didn't know he was there; the envelope was lying on the floor at his feet, the note was open on his knee; he was staring vaguely out of the window, where the plash of the fountain and the merry voices of children were heard at play. For a moment Fred doubted his senses. It was not Hilliard at all who sat there, but a haggard, miserable, self-tortured, conscience-smitten sinner, too proud for penitence, and too weak to brave the penalty of his own sin. He felt his presence an intrusion upon the man, an invasion of some secret guilt, and he said, in his usual tone:

"I'm to take an answer back, you know."

Hilliard turned his head slowly, and fixed his eyes, glazed, humid, and unflinching, on the other's face. He raised the note to the level of his eye, but didn't look at it. He held it a moment, then dropped it, and asked in a cold, repellent tone:

"What do you know of this?"

"Absolutely nothing, except that Miss Grimstone sent for me, asked me to put it in your hands, and wait for an answer."

Hilliard got up, went to the table, sat down, and in a moment handed Fred an envelope addressed to Miss Grimstone.

"Please to leave that for her," Hilliard said, in a dry, hard voice, and, without adding a word, turned back, and as Fred glanced over his shoulder when he opened the door, Hilliard stood at the window, looking out at the children on the greensward beneath.

Fred had passed half-way up the corridor leading to Nell's room, when her father came out of his apartment. He looked sharply at the young man as he bowed, and caught sight of the letter which Fred carried in his hand; as he raised his arm to knock at Nell's door, Grimstone had retraced his steps unnoticed by Fred, and was at his side and entered with him. It was too late to conceal the note, nor did Nell seem to care to have it kept secret, for she said, as they both entered:

"You have a note for me from Mr. Hilliard; give it to me."

Fred handed her the envelope. She took it with trembling

hands, but a defiant manner. Her father walked to the window and affected to look out. Fred, in some embarrassment, said:

"Miss Grimstone, if I can serve you in any way, pray command me to the utmost. Good-day."

He bowed, and, as he withdrew, Nell said:

"I am very, very grateful to you—how grateful, perhaps, some time I may be able to let you know," and gave him her hand.

He left the door, and walked slowly down the corridor in a perplexed reverie. Just as he was turning the corner of the hallway he heard his name called, and, looking back, saw Nell at the threshold of her door, invoking him with an imploring gesture to return. He was by her side in an instant; she was flushed and agitated, with the envelope in one hand and her own note in the other.

"Did Mr. Hilliard send no message with this, no word—nothing?" she gasped, and, as she held the paper, Fred could see her own signature on the note.

"No, nothing else. He appeared very ill, and—"

"Never mind, Mr. Carew, how he appeared; that doesn't interest us. All my daughter cares to know is whether he sent a verbal message with this note of her own."

"Papa, I do mind; I shall know—I'm not a child; this concerns me. Oh, I know what you mean, but you have made me desperate now, and, stranger or not, Mr. Carew and the whole world shall know that I am a slave, and can't write to my sweetheart without spying and threats! Our enemies say that we are vulgar and purse-proud, and that we have bad blood. I believe it, and I think I have more than my share, for I can't endure this way of doing things meekly. You have had your way so far, you have separated me from the man I love.—No, you shall not go, Mr. Carew," as Fred was about to withdraw. "I am going to ask another favor of you. Come," she took his arm and, hurrying to the door, opened it, and passed out; "take me to Mr. Hilliard."

"But, Miss Grimstone, reflect—"

"I have reflected. If he can't come to me, I can go to him."

"Eleanor! daughter, are you quite mad?"

"Yes, I am quite mad; I have been for days, and I mean to

cure myself. Ah! you may come. I shall be glad to have you see how I can undo your cruel work in a moment."

Her father gave her his arm, and Fred fell back a step.

"I insist on Mr. Carew coming."

"Yes, Mr. Carew, there can be no possible objection, now that you see the obstinacy of this spoiled girl. It's perhaps just as well that the lesson should be decisive."

The corridors were quite deserted, most of the guests having gone down to dinner. Fred, perplexed, and not at all comprehending the amazing incident, hoped that they would find Hilliard gone down when they reached his room. Mr. Grimstone, with cold equanimity, bade him knock and ask if they could be received. Fred rapped lightly, and to the imperative and unsuspecting "come in," he opened the door and said, standing on the threshold:

"Here are Miss Grimstone and Mr. Grimstone, who want to speak with you."

But before Hilliard could collect his wits, or realize the words, Eleanor broke from her father, and, passing Fred, stood inside the door. When the father had entered, Fred slipped out and closed the door softly, leaving the three alone, and walked, abstracted and agitated, to the end of the corridor, where he stood watching the throng of evening arrivals in the rotunda below.

Eleanor, sustained by her heroic purpose of rescuing the supersensitive lover from the thrall of heartlessness and persecution, stood panting and expectant before the brow-beaten and overchivalrous victim. He had arisen when Fred spoke, and stood thrilled and dumb. Shame, anger, consternation, anything but the rapture of the redeemed and rehabilitated lover, were expressed in the handsome face. It is said that the eyes of love are sharp! It is a shallow sophistry. To Nell, he was the picture of Porphyro, reluctant to embroil Madeline with a stern parent. Her eyes, glistening and tearful, were fixed on him with appealing invitation. Sustained by her anger, her madness, delirium, what you will, that may explain this woful *démarche*, she had been confident and even contained until now. But his eyes, quitting hers, searched the father's face; his hands played nervously with his

watch-guard. He stood interdicted, and even the eyes of her love began to discern that her lover was less rapturous than discomfited. Her eye caught the contemptuous expression on her father's face; she looked again at the man she loved; she searched his face for a sign of the sentiment she had last seen there, and she searched in vain. She had a bit of fleecy lace in her hand, and she put it for a moment to her eyes to wipe away the blinding, scorching mist that shut out the signs she sought. Aaron Grimstone stood by his daughter's side, troubled, but calm; since the ordeal must come, he was glad that it was to be decisive, final. He knew his man, and was confident of the result.

Nell spoke slowly, timidly:

"Mr. Hilliard, I am come to learn from your own lips whether —whether—"

"Mr. Hilliard, my daughter chooses to think that her father has deceived her, and that you seek her hand in marriage. I want you to tell her frankly that you never loved her, that you do not ask to marry her. She has had her head turned by romantic notions, and believes that, while you love her, you hesitate to ask her to share your poverty. Pray, make yourself understood. It is too late now for sentimentality or fine words; my daughter has chosen a painful ordeal for herself, and all that can be done now is to make this scene as brief as possible."

While her father spoke, Eleanor looked from the miserable Hilliard to the hardly less miserable father in a sort of feverish stupor. Why didn't he come and take her to his heart; why didn't he explode in thanksgiving? Why did he stand there like an image, his eyes cast down, his hands clinched to keep them from trembling? She stood shivering, with the shadow of the coming catastrophe blanching her cheeks. Speak? He could not find the vehicle in his parched throat. Move? His feet were glued to the floor.

"I have told my daughter that I made no conditions; that if you married her, she should not inherit from me. Wasn't that the statement I made?"

No answer. Nell's eyes grew large with wonder, that changed slowly to anguish. She waited, the words she wanted to utter

dying on her lips, the horror of the truth freezing her blood. The door behind her opened suddenly, and Blackdaw entered with a stranger. He started to retreat; but Grimstone, taking his daughter's arm, said:

"Don't leave; we were going to dinner, and stopped to make your editor a friendly call."

Fred, immersed in the panorama below, had not seen Blackdaw enter, and, when he looked around, the father and daughter were disappearing down the stairway at the farther end of the hall. But, a moment later, Nell came back alone, and, as she passed near Fred, she recognized him with a faint smile. She made her way to her room, and flung herself face downward on her bed. Her mother, dining in the next room, heard her, and came in to press food on her, but she would not eat.

What could it mean? she asked, in miserable torture. What malevolent spell did her father's presence work, that the man she had consecrated by her love couldn't find courage to speak in her father's presence? She wouldn't believe, even yet, that Hilliard's silence was the eloquence of self-confession. He had been hurt and humiliated by the father; he even doubted her—he would speak if they were alone—yes, that was the secret. She must give him the chance to speak alone! But how? Dinner was over, and he would very likely be in his room. She called Molly, and bade her see if he were—yes, Molly came back smiling; she heard him moving there. Her decision was instantly taken. She would know whether her father's machinations were torturing the man's heart, as this doubt and uncertainty were torturing hers. Taking Molly with her, she hastened along the corridor, now quite dim, and stopped before Hilliard's door. Molly knocked, and a gruff voice bade her enter. The girl opened the door and entered, but turned on the threshold, saying:

"Ah! Miss Nelly, darlin'—he's gone!"

"Gone?" she repeated, vacantly. "Gone where?"

She had passed the threshold as she spoke, and the porter, putting the trunks on a truck, said, unconcernedly:

"He's just off on the 'bus, ma'am, for the 8.20 New York express."

The men wheeled the baggage out. Nell walked to the table. The envelope of her own note was lying, torn in scraps, on the floor, where Hilliard had dropped them. She looked around in piteous despair, and sank into the chair where Hilliard had sat when Fred came in. The table-drawer was open, and in the corner she saw a faded bunch of clover, corn-flowers, and wild bachelor's buttons, which she had given him in the meadow. She put her hand out and gathered them carefully together, rose, and, without a word to the tearful and awe-struck Molly, who was quite overwhelmed by the antics of a lover that required so much courting, passed out. As they left the room, Mr. Grimstone was coming toward them, talking with Fred. A look of mingled pain and anger came into his face, and he said to his daughter, as if forgetting the presence of others:

"Eleanor, this is degrading and indecent! How can I trust you again, after your pledge to—to see no one unless in my presence?"

She looked at him listlessly, and her glance wandered to Fred, as she said, wearily:

"I have not broken my promise. I have seen no one since I saw— I have seen no one."

Then, with an outburst of passionate sobs, she fled swiftly along the hall and disappeared. The door of Hilliard's room was open, and Mr. Grimstone could see that it was empty. He went in and found that Hilliard had gone, and, if he left on the evening train, must have quit the hotel before Nell made her second mad quest. He turned to Fred, who had mechanically followed:

"Mr. Carew, you are a man of discretion. I needn't say that this affair is not to be mentioned. Young ladies like my daughter take curious notions. She thought this fellow was in love with her, whereas he was in love with her fortune, and, finding that I didn't propose that he should have both, he gave up all pretensions to my daughter: she didn't believe it. If I can serve you in any way, call on me; I know how to reward prudence and a close mouth." He said this without looking at him, and was gone.

Fred sat down in the deserted chamber, quite as much shocked

by the father's brutal, business-like apostrophe as he was touched by the misery of the poor girl. That Hilliard could really be inflamed with passion for Nell, Fred knew his nature too well to imagine. But he could not understand the conjunction of events that had made her the suitor and Hilliard the reluctant lover. Certainly Grimstone had hinted his willingness to let Nell marry him, if he were willing to take her without fortune. He could very readily understand Grimstone's abhorrence for Hilliard, who, in his first period in New York, had never omitted an opportunity of satirizing his vulgar ostentation, his coarse manners, and had even lampooned him in his "Atlas" dithyrambics. The incident of the check, too, he recalled, and Hilliard's contemptuous return of the money. He could very readily understand that a man of Grimstone's despotic nature would not consent to let such a man enjoy the millions he had reviled. He was not at all astonished at Nell's action, even though the half-lights in which Hilliard's conduct had shone in her eyes were unknown to him. He believed her capable of offering herself outright to the man she loved. It was inevitable in the view then taken of the rights of the rich! Why not? Nell was thoroughly imbued with the new creed, that money gave its possessors fairly unlimited privileges, such as the crown gives a queen, or birth gave the nobility of a century back. She had as good as told him, when they talked over the question, that she would take the matter into her own hands, if she loved a man, and thought him hesitating because he feared he might be thought to seek her wealth. But why had Hilliard fled? Why had he returned Nell's note without a word? What was the complexity that kept Nell in the dark, and Hilliard from speaking? What new wonder in the evolution of money-making was he about to witness?

The next morning he received a brief note from Nell, thanking him for his good offices, and telling him that the family were to leave on the early train for New York; that they would be in Valedo in October, and that she counted on his being among her few trusted friends there. The hegira was rather a relief to Fred. He could now pursue his work unmolested, and he was forced to live quietly, as he had squandered so much money during the first

of the season that he felt economy a duty as well as a necessity. Mrs. Circester was full of wonder when she met Fred, and evidently suspected that he was not wholly in the dark as to Nell's flight, for flight she persisted in calling it. Herbert still remained, no longer pretending to disguise his intrigue with Beauxjambes, now that his family were gone.

"He is treating Betty Killgore abominably," Mrs. Circester cried. "He ought to be horsewhipped!"

"Why, what is he to Miss Killgore, or she to him?"

"She adores the heartless little cad, and it has been understood for years that the two families counted on their marrying. Betty has looked upon him as her affianced ever since she was a young lady."

"If I were a relative of Miss Betty, I would rather see her in her grave than the wife of that youth."

"Yes, but you are not a man of the world, with the management of millions to look after. The union of Killgore and Grimstone will make one of the greatest money powers in the West. Killgore will be President some day, and his daughter is a great catch. You may be sure there's some meaning in the Grimstones and Hilliard leaving within twelve hours of each other. You may expect to hear something interesting from that quarter before long."

"I shouldn't be surprised," Fred said, absently, and Mrs. Circester resumed her speculations, plainly vexed with the young man, but not venturing to tell him so in terms.

CHAPTER XVI.

"DE L'AUDACE; TOUJOURS DE L'AUDACE ET ENCORE DE L'AUDACE."

WHEN the season was over, Fred remained in New York only long enough to settle his affairs, and then, with a shudder of relief, set out for Valedo, to edit the "Eagle." Of his experience in that bit of youthful hardihood his own account is the most salient and

picturesque narrative. A month or two after his installment he wrote his friend Rivers:

"I am sure if I had known all the difficulties and annoyances involved in breathing the breath of life into this ghost, I should have taken counsel of you and prudence, and remained in New York. The 'Eagle' has been, since 1861, Optimate in politics, though some of its stockholders were Ultrocrats. The tracks of corruption left in the books are something incredible. I thought we were examining the accounts of a sort of general merchandise establishment. The company, you may not know, was what is called "State Printers"—through partisan acts of the Assembly, paid for by the directors, both in money and journalistic support. There were a double set of books kept. In one—every county in the State was charged with the receipt of so much stationery, blank-books, and general office wares. In the second set of books these figured as watches, diamond rings, carriages, and every conceivable article of luxury or use.

"In other words, the State, under cover of furnishing county officers with stationery for purely State interests, was expending thousands annually in defraying personal expenses; on all this the 'Eagle's' percentages were of course enormous. Its former owners, a band of politicians, published the paper merely as an instrument of terror and party pressure. It subsisted for years on appropriations filched from the State Treasury, and black-mail exacted from the National Committee. Most of its stockholders are now either rich or are office-holders. Its editor has been made minister to a South American court, while his associates are provided with places in the departments at Washington by Senator Killgore.

"The cause of this dispersion is the recent success of the Ultrocrats, who have, for the first time since the civil war, elected the Legislature and Governor. The ring knew that the journal could no longer count upon the State Treasury for its support. When I began work the paper had a merely nominal circulation, even among the Optimate, who understood the corruption it upheld, and upon which it depended to support its existence. The curious

and significant, almost discouraging, phase of the affair is, that it is not the 'Eagle's' notorious corruption that makes its success problematic. It is the fact that it is supporting the Ultrocrats.

"Mrs. Circester warned me that we could get no support from the better classes, whatever that means. She said that Valedo having some of the 'best people' in the country, and those who wanted to be thought best, would never look at the paper, no matter how good I made it. All my old friends here came to me with the same plaint. It is in a small way the story Paul tells over again, after he had taken up the cause of the humble, simple, and God-fearing at Ephesus. My esteemed contemporaries, at first, in pitying good-humor, warned me that I might as well publish Shakespeare to the subjects of the King of Dahomey—that no newspaper, supporting the Ultrocratic party, could succeed for any length of time in Valedo. There were, they said sarcastically, too many churches, too many schools, too much respectability! Wasn't it notorious that the Ultrocrat party was made up of the ignorant, the lawless, the 'low Irish'?

"Where, my rivals asked, could readers be found among them to support so costly an enterprise as this crazy young snob was making? But I never said a word. Every day the 'Eagle' has made the contrast between itself and its contemporaries more and more marked, and every day its subscription-lists increase, until it now leads all the journals of the city in circulation, and disputes with the great dailies of the East and West in the Appalachia Valley. Every day I spread before my 'ignorant, lawless, and low Irish' constituents admirably selected extracts from the best current literature, letters from accomplished correspondents, in Rome, Paris, London, New York, and Boston; twice a week I publish a half-page of art-gossip, book reviews, and well-pondered criticisms on music, the drama, and the industrial arts.

"In spite of my contract, which makes me supreme in the editorial management, I came very near a rupture when I began to show up the monstrous robbery of the poor for the benefit of the rich in protection. This community being imbued with the plausible doctrine of the baronial creed of political economy, listened with stupefaction to the truths of free trade as the 'Eagle' in-

trepidly sets them forth. Our contemporaries broke into full cry against the paid agent of the Briton and the Cobden Club daring to insult the workman by trying to reduce his wages to foreign rates.

"Now, to make my work more difficult, many of the stockholders are interested in manufacturing, and, indolently accepting the sophistries of the shallow and self-seeking protectionists, had a vague idea that the tariff really made wages higher, while assuring them monopolist dividends in their investments. A meeting of the board was called, and I attended. They began by calling attention to the fact that nothing was said in my contract about free trade or protection, and that no journal could hope to exist in Valedo and advocate the doctrine of free trade. I simply reminded them that editorial control meant the assertion of the editor's convictions; that my convictions, based upon diligent study of economic laws, were unalterably opposed to the pillage of the many for the benefit of the few; and that they might as well expect me to uphold the similar robberies practiced by our predecessors in the 'Eagle' as the rapine of protection. I also said that it was a paradox to claim to be an Ultrocrat and a protectionist at the same time. The very essence of Ultrocracy is the right of the many to enjoy the benefits of association. It was the direct antithesis of the Optimate creed, of the ruling of the best by the plunder of the millions. I said, quite frankly, that I believed protection to be the most immoral and dangerous form of the survival of feudalism, and that I would no more consent to identify myself with a journal tolerating such iniquity, than I would with a party advocating the practices of Captain Kidd.

"I only give you the substance of the talk—it lasted all the afternoon. The majority were only half-hearted in their opposition to me, knowing that it was their own private interests they were defending in upholding the policy of protection. Half of them owned that, theoretically, free trade was the true doctrine; but as the people had been beguiled into believing that they were benefited by protection, it was not good policy for a tentative enterprise, such as they had embarked in, to attempt to combat public prejudices.

"The president of the body, a man at the head of a great iron

industry, sided with me. He said that he had been all his life a protectionist—first, because he thought that the system made his business surer and his profits larger, He had returned from a year's tour abroad, and he was convinced that he had been trusting in the most mischievous untruths; that with free trade his workmen could be kept at profitable wages all the year round, instead of six and eight months as at present; that with raw material free, he could double his business, and make markets in Mexico and South America, that would enable him to rival the British. Furthermore, he believed Mr. Carew's position a sound one.

"The Ultrocrat, he argued, was a party in the interests of the people; it is now made a reproach to it that it was made up of the people; but as the people were many millions more than the persons calling themselves 'the best,' the people would in the end win. The vote was three to one in favor of sustaining me; and even as a question of policy it has been of service to the paper, for people are protectionists, I find, just as people were supporters of slavery, through indolence, ignorance, and dislike to confront the powerful.

"You see, I am really realizing my idea of journalism—the lay-preaching of sound convictions based on knowledge, not prejudices and partisanship!"

Fred told a good deal of his novel experiment, but he did not tell all. It is hardly possible now to comprehend the prejudice and obstacles a young man coming from the East had to overcome in an aspiring, wealthy, and imitative community like Valedo. Fred set to work with the zeal of an evangel, and the ambition of a soldier put at the head of a defeated army. He soon discovered amazing ability, both for the executive details of editorial duty as well as the literary part. He organized every division of labor, and supervised the minutest details. In those days provincial journalism, as all outside of New York was classed, paid little attention to the phases of local life that make the history of a large city. Fred instantly directed his efforts to presenting each morning every event of interest, social, personal, or

political, that could interest the town. Valedo had then over one hundred thousand people; its citizens were immensely proud of the rapid growth, manifold industries, and natural beauty of the place.

They saw nothing jocose in the remark of one of their townsmen who, after a week in Paris, declared that "Valedo did more business in a day than Paris in a month." Hence Fred's work told immediately. His rivals had sneeringly announced that "the Eastern prig" who had come out to teach the backwoods how to edit, was going to make the "Eagle" a Western edition of the "Atlas" of New York, and give his attention wholly to national affairs. Within a month, the Valedoan who wanted to have the news of his own town, read the hitherto despised "Eagle" to get it. This, of course, brought city advertising; and when the stockholders saw that, they knew that their venture was a success and their new editor a prize. The rival journals watched the experiment with a tranquil conviction of its predestined failure.

They gloated over the insane policy of lavish outlay Fred adopted in news-getting, as well as that of paying his associates liberal salaries. When he began, the average wages of young men working day and night were from fifteen to twenty dollars a week. He immediately raised the average to twenty and thirty dollars, and the effect was at once marked in the superiority of the work. He made the typographical effect of his pages as marked as their literary excellence, and every expense incurred was saluted by a shout of gloating expectation from his enemies, who prophesied speedy bankruptcy. Fred himself did the work of three men; and it was work that told, because his whole soul was in it. The editorial page was soon read with interest in every newspaper office in the country, and encomiums on his triumphant success from all the considerable journals convinced the stockholders that enthusiasm and honesty go far to make up the lack of experience. When, at last, his rivals saw the necessity of making head against the new-comer, it was too late. The "Eagle" had within a few months made itself indispensable to all classes who needed the public ear. The church people, who were never known to seek its columns, or in any way identify themselves as

organizations with the "Eagle," overwhelmed the young editor with felicitations. One of the most conspicuous clergymen called attention in his pulpit to the work the new editor was doing for the best moral and intellectual interests of Valedo. Nor was Fred less sagacious politically. He forced the Ultrocrats to turn over a new leaf in local party nominations. The Optimate had governed the city for a quarter of a century. By the handiwork of the "Eagle," a reputable young carpenter was chosen mayor, and with him a city council. The city was enormously burdened with debt; the new council, upon the demand of the "Eagle," made inquiry into the financial dealings of their predecessors, and it was shown that millions had been pillaged and put to party and private uses. Subject to the most virulent abuse, Fred never permitted a word of personal controversy in the columns of the "Eagle." He dealt humorously with his adversaries, rallied their ill-temper, and to the ridicule of being young, overdressed, and eccentric, with which he was deluged, never offered a word of remonstrance. The effect of this was that he became an object of popular consideration. His opinions were quoted, his reticence admired, and his ability conceded.

The Grimstones returned in October, and Fred was made a very welcome guest. Eleanor was not the exuberantly joyous girl that Fred had first known her; she was still gay, good-humored, and cordial, but there was something of that breezy assurance lacking, which had a charm of its own, that stripped it of coarseness—the artlessness of the *ingénue*, without the brusqueness of the hoyden. Hilliard's name was never mentioned. Grimstone was peculiarly courteous to the young man, who, however, liked him less the more he saw of him. Great parties were frequently given in the "Grimstone Castle," as it was called, and Fred was always made to understand that Eleanor depended on him to help in entertaining. Once, when a girlish friend jokingly coupled the names of the two in a significant way, Nell blushed, and, so soon as she could speak privately to Fred, she said, with a sad smile:

"I hope, Mr. Carew, such nonsense as this, which you will hear often in a town like this, will not disturb you; I shall pay no heed to it."

"Such busybody tattle will only trouble me if it makes you unhappy, or makes it necessary for us to be less friendly."

"It doesn't trouble me, and it sha'n't make me less fond of you! I believe you to be capable of disinterested friendship, and I prize you now, as I have since I first knew you."

An event occurred, a few days after, that was to test the strength of this compact. While at work, the city editor brought Fred an article, written by one of the reporters, in which Grimstone's name was mentioned in a scandal suppressed by the police. The case was notorious and revolting; it was known and talked of, but had never appeared in the newspapers. While the city editor was explaining it to his chief, the president of the board of stockholders came in. He came to impress upon Fred the necessity of keeping the scandal out of the "Eagle" columns.

"The only question is whether it is true or not," said Fred, inquiringly.

"Of course, it is true! Everybody in Valedo knows Grimstone's intrigues, but we can't afford to back it. He is an advertiser, and, besides that, we dare not offend him."

"That is, you mean to say that, because he is a rich man, he can do what a poor man is disgraced for doing? If this were a poor blacksmith, the whole report would go into the police news; but, because it is a rich banker, we must keep it out? I don't understand that to be the function of journalism."

"Oh, you are unquestionably right, as a matter of principle, but he is too strong for us!"

"Well, Mr. Mabitt, the report must go in—I won't consent to such immoral compromise. How could we hold up our heads if we tolerated such discrimination? Let every man take the responsibility of his own wickedness, when the law uncovers it. Grimstone is no more to me than John Doe, when he goes before the police court. No, sir, the 'Eagle' couldn't afford to do such a thing, and I couldn't, as its editor, consent to such cowardice."

"I am quite of your opinion, and I merely advise you. It will hurt us, but we can stand it, I suppose. The publication will so astonish Valedo that, perhaps, we can make up in one way what

we lose in the other," and, rather admiring the young Aristides, the old gentleman withdrew.

Late in the afternoon, Grimstone's attorney came to Fred and expostulated. He threatened libel suits, which would swamp the "Eagle," as Grimstone could bring witnesses to prove the affair a black-mailing scheme. Fred dismissed the attorney, with a defiance to do all he could. The matter was official, and should go in just as other criminal reports did. Still later, Grimstone came himself. His manner was in no way different from the usual cold self-possession that marked him. He began, quite unconstrainedly, saying:

"I think you are making a bad mistake, my young friend! This story is simply an attempt at black-mail. My character can't be hurt by its publication, but it will give pain to my daughter. I may be wrong, but I should say that your relations with my family call for consideration on your part above your duties as a journalist. I can't see how a man, received at my table, can make it consistent with his honor to bring shame to the people who have welcomed him there. I have talked with Mr. Mabitt, and he agrees to uphold whatever you do."

"Do you assure me unequivocally, Mr. Grimstone, that this is an attempt at black-mailing?"

"I do assure you, and I will prove it."

"It is unnecessary. The report shall not go in—unless it is made a matter of record in the police court. I will send a trustworthy man to examine the facts, and, until it is shown to be legally established, I shall not print it."

It was the thought of Eleanor's grief, not Grimstone's assurance, that won this hasty concession from the young editor. He had no sooner given it than he regretted it, for he felt that Grimstone was telling a falsehood. When the latter had gone, Fred sent for the city editor and ordered a careful inquiry to be made in the police-office, and, very much dissatisfied with himself, he waited for the result. He was dissatisfied, because he had given his promise with culpable haste. He knew that his mistake was a dangerous precedent. It was of Eleanor and the family he *was thinking* instead of his duty as a journalist. The chief of

police came himself to assure Fred that the scandal was exaggerated, and that black-mail was at the bottom of it. He could give no documentary evidence. There was no record in the office. The city editor, however, made it clear to Fred that Grimstone's influence intimidated the chief, and that the documents had been made way with; that there never would have been a whisper of the affair, if the police had supposed any journal in the city audacious enough to make mention of it; that such things concerning the politicians and the rich were never allowed to leak out officially. Fred dismissed his lieutenant with instructions that in future no one should enjoy partial immunity—that men, money, or influence should never be considered; that if merciful discriminations were ever made, it should be in favor of the unhappy and miserable.

Soon after a still more perplexing incident came up for the application of this editorial theory. Killgore's wife had obtained a decree of the courts, and the Senator had almost openly installed la marquise *en titre* as his wife. They occupied discreetly contiguous apartments in Grimstone's hotel, the Albatross, and her receptions were graced by all Valedo, "in society." Now, at a little banquet given in honor of Grimstone's re-election to the Senate, madame, when a discussion of the deepening distresses of the laboring people came up, contributed this vivacious stroke of feminine sagaciousness to the problem:

"My husband has a million of acres of rice that are rotting for lack of a market. It can be sent to this country as ballast, if Congress will subsidize a line of steamers to St. Domingo. That rice would feed millions of laboring-men. In China, laborers live on rice alone, and I'm sure I don't see why Americans can't. The Irish live on potatoes; the Scotch on oatmeal; the Germans on lentils; the French on black bread and wine; the Italians on herbs and macaroni; the Turks on figs. Rice would be a cheap and wholesome dish, and needs no salt in its preparation—just water."

This sally was immensely applauded by the younger men, but Killgore looked at her warningly as he saw the eyes of the waiters fixed on the economist in malignant hatred. The next day a note

came to the "Eagle," recounting the scene, and demanding a public rebuke to this shameless Pompadour, rioting in riches ground from the poor, and then devising ways to fill their stomachs with Chinese fare. It was unsigned, but Fred held it, awaiting a responsible signature. In a day or two he sent a copy of the note to Killgore by a reporter, offering him the columns of the "Eagle" to explain this monstrous doctrine. In a few minutes Killgore came himself, in a terror of apprehension.

"In the name of God, young man, are you quite mad? This silly speech was a joke. Not a man in the room regarded it as anything else. To publish this would be degrading and scurrilous. I won't stand it! If you publish that, by the living God, I will drive you from Valedo! I will make your name a by-word and scorn all over the Union! Ah, I can do it! You needn't affect to doubt it."

"Is this all the explanation you have to make, Senator?" asked Fred, leaning back in his chair.

"Explanation—explanation? Why, damn your eyes, you impudent jackanapes, I make no explanation! I tell you simply that your breed is becoming too common in a decent profession, and that I, for one, don't propose to be black-mailed!"

"There—that is as far as you can go in that direction. When you forget the respect due your great office, I am at liberty to remind you of your baseness as a man; that your private character is a moral leprosy. The victims of your Satyr lusts are known all over the city. You have debauched happy homes, you have been chastised by outraged husbands in the open streets; you went to Congress seven years ago with not a thousand dollars to your name; you figure among the stockholders of a national bank as a holder of half a million of its capital; your name appears in General Macomber's pensioners for another half million in his John Law scheme. You paid Austin Gray twenty thousand dollars for his own and four other Ultrocrat votes in the Legislature when five members of your own party shrunk in loathing from your candidacy, and quit the caucus. You bought men like sheep, in the campaign just ended, to give the electoral vote of Appalachia to General Ajax; and you

have gathered together the very refuse of ruffianism to fill the offices in this State. Your agent in the post-office here, under your directions, destroys the 'Eagle's' mail, throws its packages into the custom-house coal-vaults, and tampers with my correspondence. And you come to me and talk of black-mail! If your age commands respect, blistered as it is with wrong-doing, or your person impunity, marked as it is with your excesses, it is a feeling for your family alone that inspires the sentiment."

The scorbutic face and glaring eyes of the Senator were quite frightful to see during this awful tirade. Many times the powerful frame moved as if to seize and strangle this railer at the party's anointed, but he did not dare to invite outsiders and give the hideous lecture an audience. He shook with passion, all the more ominous that it was repressed, and, as he stalked out, he said hoarsely:

"Very well, young man: if I am capable of all that, you may be sure I shall not fail in putting you out of the power of smirching your betters!"

The note was printed the next morning, and the editor vouched for the authenticity of the fact. The labor unions took it up, and passed resolutions denouncing, not the woman, but the Senator who had listened to such sentiments without rebuking them. The first evidence of the Senator's retaliatory vengeance was a long article in his organ, owned by his brother-in-law—a letter from New York purporting to give the result of inquiries made in the "Atlas" office. Here it was alleged that the youth who had undertaken to teach wisdom, morality, and political ethics to Valedo had been regarded as insane; that his freaks had, in spite of some skill in writing, kept him among the lowest and least considered of the editorial subordinates. As a proof of the estimate put upon his services, Blackdaw had exhibited the salary rolls for the years of the young man's tenure of service, and his stipend was far below that paid men doing less work; that he was self-sufficient and captious, and that the editor had finally dispensed with his services with great satisfaction, as a dangerous, untruthful, and unbalanced intellect; that he had then joined the notorious "Tomahawk," and that, while on the "Atlas," he had pre-

tended to be an Optimate, took the pay of the Ultrocrats, and went over to that mendacious sheet, which was known as a scandal-monger and the pirate of the press. After this odious showing the editor triumphantly asked: "Into what decent family can the writings of such a man be permitted to penetrate? How can God-fearing fathers of families tolerate the vaporings of such a madman to defile the home circle? Why should a law-abiding community tolerate the existence of a press so infamous, and guided by a wretch so abandoned?"

Fred was rather surprised at Blackdaw's connivance in this disreputable onslaught, but he wisely ignored it, and Valedo read the "Eagle" all the more eagerly, for, however base or defiled, wasn't it a success? What more could a level-headed community ask? It was his success, not his virtue, that kept Fred's enterprise on the high tide. When he reached his office on the morning of the publication of this characteristic evidence of journalistic comity, his desk was buried in flowers, with cards from most of the local personages in Valedo. Among them was a note from Eleanor Grimstone.

"DEAR FRIEND: Don't pay any heed to the horrid stuff in the 'Clarion'; no one who knows you will believe a word of it; and those who don't know you will soon learn that you are the *bravest* and noblest heart in the world! I am going to have a little dinner-party to-morrow, and you are the only gentleman invited. You will be so petted and *caressed*, that, if it were *any other man* in the world, I should be afraid it would *turn his head*. But I know yours is firm as your heart is good, and for that reason I am Your cordial and affectionate friend,

"ELEANOR GRIMSTONE."

Touched by the warm-hearted girl's kindly championship, Fred rummaged through his papers, and made a little packet of the letters he had received from his hierarchical chiefs while on the "Atlas," and went early to the dinner, to show them to her. They were strong and explicit. There were two signed by Blackdaw, calling attention to some correspondence he had written

during the Appalachian riots, in which his work was pronounced the most brilliant, vivid, and careful study of the calamity that had appeared in the American press; that its literary finish made it worthy of a more permanent form than the ephemeral pages of a newspaper; that the accounts had been printed in full by the presses of London, Paris, Vienna, and Berlin; and that he had been directed by the stockholders to express their thanks to him. Eleanor read the letters with great delight, and urged him to print them, to refute the calumnies of the "Clarion."

"Ah, no! It is not in the editor the readers of the 'Eagle' are interested, it is in his work. If I make a good paper, I don't mind a straw what is said of me. It's a fellow's work that tells the story!"

Nell kept the letters, and when her favorite had been sufficiently "petted," she rapped for order, and, to his mortification and confusion, read all the testimonials Fred had intended for her satisfaction alone.

Betty Killgore, who was of the party, was loudest in proclaiming the "Clarion" "perfectly horrid." She would pinch her uncle's ears well, she averred, for treating the paragon in such a shameful manner; and the other young ladies resolved themselves into a civic propaganda, to bruit about the refutation that Fred's modesty refused in the columns of his own journal. In effect, the Senator's first sortie was a grotesque miscarriage, for the tongues of a dozen vehement young women spread the contents of the letters through the town, till they reached the ears of the editor of a gossiping and widely-read Sunday journal, who gave a summing up of Blackdaw's written expressions of admiration, and even to the amount of the salary, which was larger than that paid to the leading editor of any of the Valedo papers, where Fred had forced prices higher, by raising them all around on his own force.

* * *

And so the rash and wrong-headed young Anarch continued to mock the counsels of the wise and the valor of the brave, and the very intrepidity of it gave him an *éclat* that conservatism and the prudent respect for tradition, which you and I love, would have worked for in vain. "The best," when they read his fierce demo-

cratic onslaughts, reviling the party of great moral ideas, and pillorying its leaders in the rack of perfidy, corruption, and dishonor, took it as a charming joke, as Marie Antoinette and her intimates read "Figaro" and the encyclopedists, and made merry over the raillery that was undermining abuse, and privileges, and rank—the throne itself, the Walpurgis feast of the Terror. And, as my pen traces these chronicles of this bristling thorn in the flesh of respectability, I protest that "age hath not withered nor custom staled" the sympathies of youth, and I find myself glowing with Fred's absurd enthusiasm, and foolishly sharing his belief that the torch of truth may even yet penetrate the gloom of selfishness and the darkness of human vanity!

But, of course, we know better in the sane repose of our studies and boudoirs; we know that only *some men* are equal, and that inalienable privileges come only to wealth, and that our duty is nobly done when we give in secret with one hand the tithe of the millions we are clever enough and strong enough to wrest from the supine and deluded multitude by our wise laws, our astute syndicates, and our address in making the silly *proletaire* approve and support—nay, exact the humane protective principle that made the Optimate the altar of the church, the pillar of strong government, and the breakwater to communism and Ultrocracy. Even the sage Montesquieu was, for a time, identified with the pagan sentiments and heretic ethics of the "Persian Letters"; so it may happen to this editor to be accused of sharing in the atrocious teachings of the young man whose career he is setting down "neither in malice nor extenuation." No—no! this is only the Jeremiah of the parable bringing the girdle from the Euphrates, that all men may see how the perversion of the ingenuous may be brought about, even in the impulse to do good!

CHAPTER XVII.

ABSALOM AND ACHITOPHEL!

IT was in his own home that Fred found the best index of the work the "Eagle" was doing. When his mother consented to have that chart of political schism read at the breakfast-table, he knew that he had nothing to apprehend abroad. It was with death in her soul that Mrs. Carew heard of her son's determination to edit an Ultrocrat newspaper. It was not until her eldest friend in Valedo, the cynosure of its best society and the archimandrite, so to speak, of the Episcopal Church, Mrs. Baron Circester, Mrs. Albion's mother-in-law, had put the seal of her approval on Fred's work that the sorrowing mother had consented to have the "sheet" admitted to the house. Mrs. Carew was one of the mothers that mold whatever is of good repute in the present breed of Americans. She was what our forefathers would have called a "godly woman," without being in any sense a propagandist or monomaniac. Dogmatic and unbending she certainly was, but it was the kindly dogmatism of conscience—kindliness rather than conviction. She hated cordially, heartily, openly, but her hatred never went beyond a sharp word.

When Mrs. Carew said she had "no patience" with men, creeds, or politics, that meant that reasoning was at an end; that in this world there was no longer a place for them, and only the immeasurable goodness of Divinity could be expected to deal adequately with such perversity in the next! She had the kindest of hearts, the wisest of heads, and the noblest of impulses constantly at play. She was a benediction to the suffering, wherever found, a help to the helpless, a stout foe to social wrong-doing, and withal prejudiced as Peter himself before he got the keys! She was in her sixtieth year when Fred's escapade came to shock all her well-grounded convictions of social and political righteousness. Married in her sixteenth year to the late Dr. Carew, every year since had been full of observation and growth. She would not pass among the

women of genius as one of them; but she had rare intelligence, an accurate and swift perception, lucidity in thinking, and excellent powers of expression. These qualities had given her pre-eminence in the various church and charity boards of which Valedo boasts.

She was president of the Board of Governors of the Old Ladies' Home, secretary of the Hospital Board, and manager in innumerable other eleemosynary boards. Her family, the Carys, had in early days been the chief folk in that beautiful Geneva that shares some of the admiration with the elder city over the sea—for a beauty that suggests the fitness of the name. She had given great scandal to her family when she married Dr. Carew, one of the very few apostles of the despised Hahnemann in this country in those days. She had borne the pitying condolences of her family, and the veiled scorn of her friends, with sturdy combativeness. She had emigrated with her husband to Valedo, and upheld his fainting courage as only a resolute woman can. By an inspired tact and the nameless adroitness that only womanly intelligence can keep clear of the questionable, she had pushed the young physician in the face of a dead wall of stupidity, prejudice, and ignorance.

She made the introduction of homœopathy a cult, and declared that she would never be satisfied until the victims of the old school had their eyes opened, and indeed the honest woman lived to see the despised sect the most flourishing and highly considered in the "genteel" circles of Valedo. The doctor himself always laid his good fortune to Kate's superior powers. It was Kate who pointed out the bit of property that her savings enabled him to buy, and by the sale of part of which he was afterward enabled, in 1856, to build that handsome square mansion on Valparaiso Avenue that every one in Valedo knew so well. It was Kate who shamed the city councils into admitting homœopathic practice into the hospitals, and, as she stoutly asserted, gave the unfortunates a chance for their lives. It was Kate who saved the soft-hearted doctor from the rueful experience of long columns of figures on the wrong side of the books every year, for the good man gave right and left, and took no heed of the morrow. It was Kate's good management that enabled him to indulge those de-

lightful experimental fantasies which most physicians lay by with their college rubrics. It was Kate, too, that fixed his prices as he rose in esteem, for, when it was seen that he rarely lost a patient, even prejudice gave way, and he was called in when his "regular" brothers failed. While his charges were modest, he was but slightly considered; but when fashionable Valedo began to send for him, at first *en cachet*, it is true, he soon became the mark of the social *ton*, and then Kate insisted on rates that made the good doctor tremble, and virtually circumscribed his practice to the very wealthy.

But by this time (1854) the way had been opened, and others of the despised school came in and made homœopathy almost "regular." In 1868 Dr. Carew had the largest practice in Valedo. Mrs. Carew's various boards employed him, and the family looked forward to ease, if not opulence, when the good doctor, attending a medical convention in the East, was thrown between the cars and brought home to Valedo mangled beyond recognition. Mrs. Carew bore the shock with such courage as women only show under grievous calamity. The doctor's affairs were not in such a prosperous state as his large practice led the world to suppose. He had invested in oil-stock and Western railways, and, when the estate was settled, the widow had barely an income of twelve hundred dollars to depend on. She could not keep Fred at college, and educate the young Jack, without sacrificing her home. Fred at once solved the problem by going to work.

The Circesters, whose children were all married and living elsewhere, rented their house and came to live with the widow, and the homestead was thus retained. The loss of her husband made no change in Mrs. Carew's social and public activities. Indeed, her interest in the Old Ladies' Home, St. Mark's Hospital, and the annual charity festivals, increased as her tutelage of her husband ended. The majestic black-robed figure, with the widow's cap and long veil, became as conspicuous wherever suffering was, as the good doctor's had been. Even with her reduced income she was first in all church-giving and private deeds of good. During her husband's life there had not been wanting censorious critics to

declare that Kate Carew used her church vantage to exploit the doctor's practice; that she had with a worldly-wise eye seen from the first that the Episcopal Church was to be the Brahmin caste of the social system of Valedo, and that she had gone over to that fallow field for the crop that could be reaped more readily there than in the sterile social organism of Presbyterianism. The even tenor of her enthusiasm, now that nothing was to be gained, silenced these well-bred calumnies, and the most arrogant lords among the dominating plutocrats were proud and glad of the stately widow's recognition. Whenever the hospital funds ran low or any charity languished, Kate's modest brown horse and shabby Victoria made the rounds of the banks and the great factories, and the deficits were turned to comfortable balances.

Dr. Carew himself had taken no interest in politics. In his youth he had, like his father before him, voted the Ultrocrat ticket, perhaps because in those days it was quite as compromising to advocate Optimate principles as in 1868 it was to uphold the Ultrocrats. Mrs. Carew herself knew no more of political measures than most American women. She saw that in St. Mark's all the men were Optimate, and that was enough for her. Had her rector, the Rev. Adelbert St. George, ordered his flock to vote the Ultrocrat ticket, she would have set out to see that the edict was obeyed. But the rector was known to support the Optimate. He was distantly related to a noble English family, and he had often been heard to declare that the only salvation of this country was to be found in maintaining the Optimate, who were the bulwarks of law and order in this country, as the Conservatives were in Great Britain! The Reverend Adelbert, as he was called, was very "high-church," and had at first found his path full of thorns.

It was only among a very few of his flock that he was at the beginning an idol. When he succeeded in raising the church debt, and erecting that superb Gothic, modeled on the Ely Cathedral, of which Valedo is so justly proud, he became the autocrat of the diocese. He was generally called, by the unregenerate, the "reverend financier," or "the holy money-grubber." His "operations" were the wonder and envy of the sharpest money-makers

of the town. St. Mark's, for a time, became great fashion for the worldlings, who went to hear the Reverend Adelbert expound the 'doctrine of financial salvation," as they wickedly said, alluding to his skill in saving certain of his flock from the results of bankruptcy. Some reckless wags even went so far as to put up quotations of St. Mark's stock on 'change, thereby alluding to certain mortgages and investments the rector had secured for the church.. It was to this wise young doctor—for the Reverend Adelbert was hardly thirty—that Mrs. Carew carried her grief when Fred came home to take charge of the "Eagle." The clergyman soothed the wretched mother, observing that most very young men were apt to take up with unorthodox notions in religion and politics, but, as they grew older, they were worn out of them by the attrition of hard facts and worldly experience.

"But," she said, piteously, "I know my son: he will grow stronger and stronger the more he is opposed," and she added, naïvely, unconscious of the humor of it: "He's like me—when he once believes he is right, he only grows more obstinate the more he's reasoned with!"

The Reverend Adelbert, who had his own reasons for knowing the truth of this, did not compromise himself by the laugh that was working in him. Mrs. Carew was the main instrument by which he maintained himself in St. Mark's, and he had seen himself rescued from destruction too often by her confiding faith in his holiness, and her indomitable suasion with others, to risk the creation of a doubt in her mind of his sacerdotal infallibility.

Fred was in the "Eagle" editorial rooms, preparing his campaign, when the rector came in. He merely nodded when the doctor announced himself; for Fred, though the most liberal of men, was hard at heart and stiff-necked in insensibility when he came within the sphere of this worldly-wise clergyman. He perhaps disliked him all the more, that he succeeded in blinding his usually astute mother to his merely veneered churchliness. He believed him venal, and knew him to be a sham, and his face rarely masked sentiments of this sort, when he cherished them for cause.

"Are you too busy to give me a minute's talk, Fred?" asked

the rector, seating himself at the young man's by no means cordial invitation.

"That depends, Mr. St. George: if to talk religion, yes—if business, no."

"Well, it's partly business, for in the end the best business is based on a religious foundation."

"That's a true statement of religion, as you understand it, I'm free to admit," said Fred, with hardly concealed raillery. The Reverend Adelbert, meekly passing over this Philistine gibe, continued:

"Your good mother, my dear boy, is deeply hurt at your identifying yourself with a—a—with a party that is—is not wholesome in its tendencies; that is a—made up of the ignorant classes; the, I may say, the communistic elements—the dregs of the community. Your father was an honored member of society, a noble churchman, an exemplary man. Your mother is a saint. She is looked up to in every respectable household in this community. Her works are pointed out everywhere. A Christly example is wanted. Surely you, her son, Dr. Carew's son, can not persist in a course that is to—to efface the honors of such noble lives! You can not mean to give their good name to a paper, edited in the interest of the Ultrocrat party—a party which, in this city and all large cities, where ignorance is in the majority, rules through bad men and bad methods? I beg of you not to begin your career with such a burden. It will be a stain on you through life; and later, when you have found that it shuts you out of companionship with the only people that a refined man cares to be identified with, you will find it an impediment to your fortunes. Look about you! Who are Ultrocrats? In our own church, St. Mark's, only the poorer members of the congregation are of that party. We couldn't support a vestry if we had only that party to depend on! Even in a worldly sense it is bad policy."

Fred had settled back comfortably in his chair when the clergyman began, and had followed him with such flattering interest, nodding his head with implied assent at the most crushing assertions as they were educed, that the envoy felt, for one intoxicating moment, that he had the victory.

"Mr. St. George, of course you have studied the state of parties in America? You know the principles that each advocates. Will you tell me what the Optimate has set forth since 1868?"

"Why, I'm sure, Fred, of course, the party believes in law and order; it believes in restoring peace to the South, and civilization and—and—"

"That's a generous and enlivening doctrine, I own; but if the Optimate advocate this, why don't they do it? It is now seven years since the war ended. The South is overrun with such thieves as would make Cicero give the consuls a clean bill. The States are ruled by carpet-baggers sent by the national Administration, or upheld by it. But there is no need of going South to test the fitness of the party. Point me out any considerable number of the leading public men of the party that haven't grown mysteriously rich during the last ten years. Look at the recent exhibit of corruption in the Crédit Mobilier and the French arms sale; of the San Domingo job. Look at a Vice-President tainted by the sin that immortalizes Bacon as 'the meanest of mankind.' Cabinet ministers, Senators, and Congressmen, so greedy, dishonest, and unfaithful that Hastings's spoliation of the Punjaub is mere venality in comparison. Let us come nearer home. Here's Killgore, our Senator. He went to the Senate a few years ago in debt. He is now ranked as a millionaire many times over. Look at the late election of General Ajax, bought in open shambles as boldly and bluntly as you would buy tribes of revolted Indians to keep the peace. Look at the argument put forth in the late campaign—a plea to the most ignoble of human passions—hatred of the conquered. You say it is degrading to be identified with the Ultrocrats. So Herodias said to John when he preached the doctrines of the Nazarene. But let me tell you, Mr. St. George, that, as a clergyman, you should be cautious in giving breath to such phrases as you have just used. If you will look at the figures in the late election, you will see that, out of the nine million votes, General Ajax got but little more than half, and over a million of these were the colored votes of the Southern States. As to the ignorance of the Ultrocrats, I don't know a

college professor in the country that isn't an advocate of the principles of that party, though many of them, through cowardice, vote with the others. Show me an educated man who isn't a believer in the doctrines of free trade; show me an educated man that doesn't shrink from the aristocratic and centralizing tendencies of the Optimate. If anything were needed to point out the way to a young man, look at the action of the men who made the Optimate a great and splendid party in 1860. Every man of them has quit the ranks now, leaving those men as leaders who were despised and distrusted in the other party. As for the ignorance of the great cities upholding the Ultrocrats, there is but one large city in the country where they have the majority—New York—and, bad as the government is there, it compares favorably with Philadelphia, Bigbrag, or even our own Valedo here. No, sir; I was an Optimate so long as I was ignorant. Now that I have light, I am so no longer. I may not always uphold the Ultrocrats, but, please God, an Optimate I shall never be again; and I'll venture the prediction that, in ten years from now, no decent man will own himself one unless new wine is poured into the old bottles."

Fred had risen during this florid and ingenuous harangue, and paid little heed to the horrified and indignant embassador. Never had that shepherd heard such blasphemous railing at the Lord's anointed. He gathered his gloves about his wrist in perplexed dismay, and stood with his hat in his hand, irresolute whether to fly, or put his hand on Fred's mouth to stop the torrent of contaminating heterodoxy.

"I am sorry, Fred, that you have been in bad company since you left us. I can only join your mother in prayers for your rescue from this hideous abysm."

"Yes, I have been in bad company. I've been helping to edit an Optimate journal, and all my associates were of that party, and I know them pretty well."

But with a stiff bow the scandalized rector was gone, and he heard the godless youth roaring with laughter as he passed down the dark stairway to the street.

So that, much as you and I, who are, of course, respectable

people and unquestioning Optimate, may blame this rash and wrong-headed young zealot, we must own that he had grounds for his confidence in his own foolish wisdom when he saw his mother scanning with approval the "Eagle," and knew that every member of St. Mark's was a daily reader, and that the vestry had ordered the church advertising to be printed in its columns; and, not only that, but the Reverend Adelbert had sent for one of its reporters to take down Bishop Califf's sermons to young men, and, on the editor's refusal to print them as news, had paid a half-dollar a line for their insertion as advertisements! What wonder that this atrocious young pervert was confirmed in his monstrous backsliding, when it filled the exchequer, brought the stockholders in admiring delegations to his desk, and made the "Eagle" stock eighty per cent above par, and not to be had at that? Then, as I said before, came the election and the overthrow of the Optimate, the exposure of years of such turpitude as put the social status of many of the most respected citizens in mourning, and made the return of the party to power an impossibility during the memory of a generation. Nor was Mrs. Albion Circester without some weight in the young man's success. She was socially supreme, and wherever she went Fred's *renommée* as a Bayard and poet was chanted in the dulcet keys she knew how to sound so incomparably well.

You must not suppose that she sympathized with his odious political vagaries. No, she put her approval on moral grounds only. Such a newspaper, she declared, was a matter of local pride; it gave a distinctive character to the city, like that famous journal in a small New England city that was read and quoted from the Merrimac to the Pacific. As to Fred's being an Ultrocrat, wasn't it well known that the great Lord Beaconsfield had been a democrat in his youth, and didn't Bismarck drink beer and talk socialism with Lasalle? All that would pass away when he grew older and understood his own interest better! So Fred became a very interesting object in society. His political heresies gave the great something to condone, and there's nothing society is more willing to do than condone, particularly where the sinner has no need of active partisanship. But it must not be supposed that

the rival journalists folded their arms and bowed meekly to the conquering stride of this insolent innovator. When they found that pleasantries about his personal attire, and ingenuous innuendoes at his fortune-hunting in the Grimstone direction, with hints about the habits he had formed in metropolitan gayeties, didn't annoy or arouse him to response, they revived the scandal of the accusation of bribery, his dismissal from the "Atlas," and, as a climax, his presence at a revolting debauchery in Reynard's restaurant. All this, however, painful as it was to Fred, only made the public more curious to read his paper; some, perhaps, to see what he would say, and others as a protest against the malignant cowardice of the warfare. To satisfy his mother and Mrs. Circester, rather than to vindicate himself, he republished the story as narrated in the "Tomahawk," and had the satisfaction of seeing it reproduced in the columns of his contemporaries, where, having been refused as a correction, it was by order of the "Eagle's" stockholders printed and paid for as an advertisement under threat of proceedings at law.

This was the roseate horizon that Fred's eager eyes saw on all sides of him when the cloud, no bigger than a man's hand, suddenly arose in the air, a signal of catastrophe.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A WINTER'S TALE.

WHETHER the cup be joy or grief we hold to our lips, the hand trembles, and we lose some of the draught. Fred's delight in the unwonted freedom of his pen gave him a certain terror as time went on. There was no means of gauging the direct result of his vehement teachings. Everything in physical nature has a point of measurement—a level from which its working may be ascertained. The chemist has his unit, and can mark to the smallest globule the change wrought by his ingredients; so through all the varied phases of physics; but in ethics there is no means *of judging* the immediate or remote effects of truth!

Valedo did not give any sign of social or political revival under the radical teachings of its new evangel. Art-schools and academic philosophies did not at once spring into life as the young enthusiast vaguely dreamed they should. The ardor for money-making was not replaced by the religion of sweetness and light, under the satiric flashings of the over-confident casuist. The spear of truth he found singularly blunt before the armor of egoism and habit, engendered by social rivalries and human frailty. Made up largely of men and women who had come West from Boston and New York, Valedo was a reflex of the dominant social tendencies of those cities, modified by climacteric and other intangible conditions. The units of its various social groupings touched at certain points, the groups themselves were as uninterpenetrable as the circles in a Chinese puzzle-box. In large cities there is a catholic disregard sometimes of the mere accident of wealth; in the Valedos never. In a large city a man is sometimes well thought of, even if he can not produce a tree exhibiting Revolutionary or Mayflower ancestry; in the Valedos never. It is true that a lucky church connection may make up for these misfortunes, but there is even there a thinly veiled tolerance, such as we may imagine a good Catholic of Philip's time feeling for a co-worshiper upon whose ancestry the scarlet signal of Torquemada's court had been wrought!

Though a richly endowed college was one of the evidences of intellectual pre-eminence that Valedo pointed to with pride, its sectarian basis denied it the humanizing influence in the growth of civilized amenities that follows in the track of a real university. The faculty were received with deference in the regnant social circles, but they were so closely identified with the Presbyterian cult that their influence was for the most part sectarian. Hence, coteries were formed about churches instead of ideas or mutual tastes, congenialities, and what not, that make reading-rooms rational and academic. High fashion was represented by the Episcopalian vestries; the intellectual by the Unitarians, who had four strong societies, and two very brilliant and admired ministrants. Intense respectability, symbolized by wealth, was represented in a very numerous body of Baptists. The Presbyterians

stood for what would be known in England as the high middle "class," nor, grotesque as it may sound, was the word "class" spared in dealing with the congeries of the accretions that made up the various circles. A tacit deference was observable toward the communicant of St. Mark's, St. Luke's, St. John's, or Grace Church, which was plainly yielded in modified form to the deacons of the First Baptist, the Second Presbyterian, or Bethany. As for the Catholics, who comprised a third or more of the city's population, they were regarded as much apart as the Jews under Charles Stuart, or the Christians under Tiberius. Some Catholics did hold high state, but it was somewhat in the fashion of the Rothschilds after the admission of the first of that name to Parliament. The Bishop of St. Ignatius, a very charming man and brilliant theologian, if he found himself at a general gathering, was as much an object of curiosity as a Jewish rabbi or an Armenian Patriarch. There were thoughtful fathers, indeed, who believed "Romanism" a menace to the future of the republic. Grimstone and Killgore were known to be filled with solicitude when they saw the hospitals, schools, reformatories, truant homes, and other establishments of a scholastic-eleemosynary character that attested the diligence and charity of the Catholic population! There was a panic in the religion and charity of Valedo one awful day when a Catholic councilman was elected, and an indignant outcry from the Optimate press when a majority of the School Board were known to be members of the dreaded communion! When the first Catholic mistress was appointed in the public schools there was an indignation meeting, and the wealthier families who sent their small boys and girls to that luckless school withdrew them.

When, in the course of time, the admirably trained minds of the convent were brought into common recognition in the schools, there was a general withdrawal, and from that time may be traced the sentiment which holds public schools vulgar. After that refined Valedo carefully guarded its infantile minds from corruption in the chaste and "select" schools which sprang up in the fashionable quarters of the city. When a graduate from Fordham, a poet and man of letters, was given the chair of Languages and Rhetoric in the high-school, the Optimate members for Valedo in

the Legislature brought in a bill, adroitly worded, excluding persons whose religion recognized a higher authority than the republic from places in municipal or State schools! The bill didn't pass, and gave great scandal to the less zealous members of the party, who denounced it as a blunder that would cost votes. Killgore, on the other hand, promised that if he were nominated for President he would insist on a plank looking to a national reform which would check the alarming encroachments of the Church of Rome, and as Killgore's mother was a Catholic, every one knew that his convictions were sincere, and that he was actuated by the highest public good!

It may easily be imagined what effect the flamboyant latitudinarianism of our young Aristides created upon a system or series of systems like these. Intolerant to none of these clashing congeries, he became intolerable to all. The young men, who had never before read newspapers, followed Fred's luminous raillery with delighted surprise. They had never imagined dry questions of sociology could be invested with such piquancy and charm. The college boys were first infected; then followed the Athenæum Society, a body of young men who had sustained a languid interest in a library association, which, during the winter months, engaged notable people to deliver lectures in a course. This body had been made potent in closely contested elections by the Optimate, and had many a time turned the perilously close scale. Fred's first victory was the adhesion of this formidable body to the support of his candidates, and the admission to its course of eminent free-traders and political reformers. Outraged by such a pervasion, many members of the governing board withdrew, and their places were promptly filled by pronounced Ultrocrats and reformers, Fred himself among them. It was at this stage of Fred's civic splendor that Hilliard came to Valedo to deliver a lecture before the Athenæum Society.

He was not the gay "Archy" nor the magnificent "Prince Rupert" we knew him long ago. He was still humorous, but not good-humored. His sayings had a bitter spice of acridity, that only his consummate knowledge of the world saved from rancor. There was more reserve in his manner, not the reserve of

self-poise, self-repression, and a keener knowledge of himself, but rather an alert suspension of his wits calculated to make them more effective when they struck. To the great surprise of his friends, he had withdrawn a good deal from the gayeties in which he had for so long been the gayest. It was rumored that he was writing a book, but he never admitted it. He said that he had been studying the Chinese tongue, preparatory to a visit to Cathay.

He was to pass some time in and near Valedo, and the highest circles were on the *qui vive* to do him homage. His family lived in the pretty little town of Melito, a sort of summer resort on Fortunatus Bay. He gave out that he came for rest, and passed most of his time in that secluded retreat, coming to town when the spirit moved him, He was not cordial when he met Fred. There was a hard complaisance in his manner that was infinitely disagreeable to that inflammable young philosopher, and their intercourse never took on the old intimacy of their earlier days. Hilliard was, in fact, annoyed at the vogue he found Fred enjoying. He had always thought him a good-natured, passably clever youth, with incorrigibly provincial manners and tastes, and an utter incapacity to reconcile himself to the grand conditions of life. He could see nothing but his callowness, and took no heed of the strong underlying fiber of his former comrade's character, and quite resented the impression he had made on Valedo. He attributed to provincial ignorance the qualities awarded his rival, and looked on his *éclat*, in a society which he had once found so aristocratic, as an evidence of the shallowness of country people.

He contrasted Fred's *renommée* with the concessions he had found so intoxicating in New York, a few years before, and which of late had begun to lessen, whether because of his own insensible change in manners and motive, or from other causes, he could not quite determine. But a change, he was vaguely conscious, had come over the conditions that had made him a social force, if not the master of the world he best loved to dominate, and felt distinctively fitted to adorn. He theorized a good deal on social anomalies. He was fond of satirizing his native land in the lighter vein he sometimes wrote in the "Atlas," and was never tired of

contrasting the democratic rawness of his countrymen with the pristine elegancies of the Old World. He was fond of alluding to the "higher classes, the middle classes, and the lower classes," quite in the cant of the Briton or German, whose arbitrary lines are established to mark the pretensions of the various groups into which populations are divided. He had mingled with the Valedoans but a short time, when he admitted that its "higher class" was correlated to the same body in New York as the foliage of one hot-house is to another; the same tepid temperature brought out the same moral coloring and fragrance, and the same excesses of atmospheric pressure the same hectic and feverish decay of the humanities. Money in Valedo, as in New York, was the blue ribbon that gives the social *pas*, even where the tradition of Mayflower ancestry was most pertinaciously reclaimed.

He was thus forced to modify his first half-contemptuous *appréciations* of Fred's social conquests. His assimilation by the higher class could not be accounted for by ascribing to Valedo a less discriminating judgment than New York. For the moment the young man was as much a part of the social organic structure as the plainest little crab-apple tree in a garden, which the frosts of spring have transformed into a glittering Hesperidean. Underneath the tolerance he knew there was a spirit of resenting intolerance, a reserve of hostile vindictiveness that would turn Fred's triumphs into bitterness, if the time should ever come when the high social powers that lowered the scepter took it in their heads to teach him that he was a caprice, not a part of the social comedy. Then the presumptuous youngster would be made to see that the court paid him was merely a form of supercilious condescension, which wealth and "birth" sometimes amused themselves by lavishing on wit and parts, bestowed in the same sardonic spirit that the courtiers of Louis showered amities upon Molière, after he had been invited to break bread with the "grand monarque."

As to jealousy, Hilliard was too much confirmed in accepting himself in the estimate the world had put upon him to admit even to his own thought such a condition of equality between himself and his ancient comrade; for the moral world is unlike the phys-

ical: we are prone to take our highest flight as the level of our normal orbit, and look upon anything less as temporary phasis of our onward strokes. A man unbalanced enough to give way to such visionary vagaries as Fred had no future, though his antics might for the moment amuse the grand world and give him a fictitious equality with his betters. For sustained flight in these freezing regions, Hilliard knew that natures like his own were the only ones that had any certainty of perennial success.

Furthermore, Grimstone had been as good as his word: opportunities for increasing Archy's capital had been put in his way through Blackdaw. He had been given points on legislation, bearing on railways and other stocks, that had enabled both to clear many thousands of dollars during the last few months, and there were other schemes pending that might make millions for these favored *protégés* of Mammon.

Hilliard felt his chains quite tolerable when he found they were linked with gold. His literary reputation and journalistic prestige were of value to the millionaire, and he was not as yet asked to compromise any conviction that escaped the moral wreck of the last three years of misplaced ideals and unworthy purposes. Herbert had spoken to him once of Nell's engagement to Dorr as a settled matter, and he no longer experienced the crushing abasement that his partly voluntary and partly forced relinquishment had left him in when Grimstone intervened at Saratoga. He had no means of knowing Nell's frame of mind, but he knew that she was socially as conspicuous as ever, and, though he did not seek to put himself in her way since he came to Valedo, he took no particular pains to avoid her. He was sure to meet her, and he meant to resume his old, easy friendliness, without an allusion to the past. The night of his lectures before the Athenæum, he came to town and dined with the Killgores; Betty and Herbert drove him to the hall. The audience was very "fashionable and select," as the journals pointed out the next day, specifying the names, with occasional individualization of toilet, that delighted the town modistes for months. Nell had accepted Fred's escort and sat quite near the stage, and the lecturer's eyes, it was noticed, avoided her during the delivery of his address—a study

of the "Culture of Social Life," illustrated by many charming anecdotes of foreign personages and home incidents.

It had been arranged that Fred was to relinquish Nell to Herbert as soon as the lecture was over, as he was forced to be at the "Eagle" office early. They arose and quitted the hall with the first, and Nell was left in the stage antechamber to await Herbert and Betty. When her brother came for her, Nell informed him that she was going home with Mrs. Circester, and, as she was in the back part of the hall, she would wait for her. She shivered a little as she spoke, and begged Betty to lend her the thick shawl she had brought and was not using. When her brother and his companion were gone, she adjusted her veil closely over her face and seated herself near the door. It took fully twenty minutes to clear the hall, and as the last of the audience left, the gas was turned down. There was only a dim light in the corridor when Hilliard came out with some of the members of the board. He recognized Betty's shawl, and came forward, shocked and chagrined.

"I declare, Miss Killgore, I didn't imagine you would wait; I meant to walk home."

She arose, and the murmur of the other voices concealed whatever of dissimilarity there might have been between her own and Betty's as she said through her veil, "I didn't mind, and, besides, we couldn't let you risk taking cold."

The committee were paying their final congratulations, and Hilliard hardly caught the sound as he gave the lady his arm. In another moment they were seated in the carriage, and Hilliard, with an exclamation of relief, turned to his companion:

"I'm glad that ordeal's over. I would rather face a brigade in battle than a country audience where I know most of the people. But it was a splendid company, and I think they were satisfied."

"Yes, they were delighted."

"Why, how hoarse you are, Miss Killgore; you've really taken cold. Are you well wrapped? I shouldn't have recognized your voice."

"Yes; I—I'm not quite in my right voice."

"You must doctor yourself when you get home." Then, after a moment: "I saw Miss Grimstone in front. How lovely she looked!" and he sighed lightly. At the same instant the carriage came under the brilliant light in front of the post-office, where an experiment in illumination was going on. Hilliard's companion had removed her veil, and as he turned his eyes he saw that it was not Betty, but Eleanor. Her cheeks were flaming; her eyes humid and bright.

"Miss Grimstone?"

"Yes; it is I. O Mr. Hilliard, I could not accept my father's word. I—I must know from your own lips that you gave me up willingly; that you never loved me; that you were not deceived about me."

She palpitated between shame and rapture, and could not find voice. As she spoke, Hilliard had moved suddenly from her side to the seat in front of her, and shrank into the corner in an agony of loathing and dismay. Of all the duperies Fortune plays its fools, this was the cruelest for both. Even had he loved her with the passion that sweeps away real obstacles, this amazing freak would have chilled his ardor. He was sensitive to the proprieties as only those are who take on refinement through extraneous teaching, as the self-made monarch is more rigorous in court etiquette than the scion of a thousand dynasties of royal blood. Eleanor's simplicity and honesty saved her from realizing the position she had placed herself in, and she, poor girl, was convulsed only by the doubt of the man's loyalty that tortured her now for the first time in all the miserable comedy of errors that her own sentimental imagining had embodied. She waited, with death in her soul, for the words he was to speak. The repulsion her act inspired gave him the force and assurance that under normal contingencies he would have sought in vain. He was once again master of himself; the poor girl had made his conduct defensible, if not honorable.

"No, Miss Grimstone," he began, in a low voice, "your father acted toward me with fairness, if not delicacy. He informed me that my presence, as a suitor, was not agreeable to him or his family; that you were engaged to another man whose person was

in every way more acceptable; that while he would put no obstacle in the way of a union between us, he would disinherit and disown you. No word of love had ever passed between us. I had no right to suppose that you had any other feeling for me than you had for Mr. Carew, or Mr. Dorr, or a half-dozen others with whom you were cordial and gracious, as you always are. I had never felt for you the sentiment that I believe to be essential to happy marriage, and I freely gave your father the promise he asked, to make no pretensions in future, as I had never in the past, to your hand. I supposed you knew this, or I would have written you. Believe me, Miss Grimstone, you possess qualities to make you worthy of a man who could be a better husband to you than ever I could be. I am unworthy of you. I have known it from the first, and that would have kept me from asking of you the sacrifice that my selfishness and ambition sometimes blinded me into wickedly coveting."

She had listened with incredulous anguish as these ignoble words poured out in soft, measured, vibrating music that almost took the accent of sincerity. I doubt whether she realized the significance of them at all. Her hands were clasped, and she bent forward, striving to catch his eye. The confusing sense of dreaming kept her from fainting; the yellow banners of light flashing across the interior of the carriage as it rolled under the lamps aided the sense of phantasmagoria. When he had done, she sat, still bent forward, as if expecting the blows to continue, as one walking in a storm thrusts his head forward to meet the blast. In this attitude the carriage stopped, the door opened, and Hilliard hastened to get out. She never said a word. The footman stood respectfully waiting. Hilliard said in a low voice:

"They have heard the carriage stop and are at the door. Won't you come?"

She had wrapped her shawl over her head, and, as she got out, sprang past Hilliard, whose arm was extended to receive her.

Without a glance, or in any manner recognizing his presence, she walked firmly to the doorway and disappeared as the carriage rolled out of the other side of the *porte cochère*.

CHAPTER XIX.

APOCALYPSE!

HERBERT had returned to Valedo, as his family believed, to settle down preparatory to the long-contemplated marriage with Betty Killgore. His courtship of that good-natured *fiancée* had never been assiduous or sentimental, and Betty, who adored him, was quite content with his perfunctory wooing, secretly cherishing the purpose of making him all her own when the nuptial knot was safely tied. She was not ignorant of her handsome lover's errant fancy for the Beauxjambes, but, as she had heard so much of young men's "wild oats" in the higher circles, in which her papa's senatorial rank and money gave her assured place, she thought little of the scandals whispered within her hearing, and never gave the young man cause to suspect that she knew or resented his infidelities. Herbert paid assiduous court to the "Eagle's" editor, and Fred soon discovered the cause. He had negotiated an engagement for his charmer at the Academy of Music, a temple of the drama, thus named to conciliate the still lingering prejudices of old-fashioned folks, who would have shunned Shakespeare in a building openly called a theatre. But in an "Academy" they made no objection to patronizing any development of that modern nondescript which holds the stage under the name of comedy, drama, or *opéra bouffe*. The building was owned by Grimstone, and the manager found his lines in hard places when Herbert's presence on the stage was prohibited by his indignant father under threat of withdrawing the lease. It was quite as embarrassing to offend the son as the father; for when a dull week came during the season, Herbert could always be depended on to bring a good benefit to the bankrupt treasury. So the manager led a dreary life between the irascible father and the importunate son.

Herbert found means for evading the peremptory orders of his parent. He had keys made for the doors opening from the boxes to the stage, and, while ostensibly in front in exemplary study of

the Muses, he was behind in the green-room or dressing-rooms demoralizing the *dramatis personæ* with untimely champagne or other beverages of a sort not calculated to steady the nerves of the players. Fred had forbidden the admission of Herbert's preliminary panegyric of the fascinating Beauxjambes in the columns of the "Eagle," and the young man had indignantly come into the editorial rooms to demand the cause. Fred laughed, as he answered:

"Why, good heavens! Beauxjambes is no singer! She can't sing a note correctly. If it were not for her disreputable *doubles entendres* and lascivious gestures, she wouldn't be tolerated in a low-class concert troupe. We can't publish such laudations as you have sent us. It would shock public decency when she comes; it would deprive us of public confidence."

"But the 'Optimate,' the 'Patriot,' the 'Bugle,' and the 'Clarion' all publish them, and I'm sure they are taken by the best people," returned Herbert, hotly. "I tell you what it is, Carew, you're carrying things with too high a hand here, and you'll come to grief, see if you don't! Valedo won't stand such airs. I hear the best people everywhere denouncing the 'Eagle's' radicalism. They are tired of your eternal preaching of virtue."

"Yes, I shouldn't be astonished. It is the 'best people,' as you call them, that tire first of virtue. I'm not surprised to hear that. However, be easy in your mind, it isn't the best people that we are publishing the 'Eagle' for. I should think myself in danger if I had them with me, for then I should suspect that I was upholding them in servility, fraud in politics, and rascality in business; to my thinking there is no division of a community so dangerous to the social system as the 'respectable classes,' as you would call them—men and women who approve all that is cowardly, and base, and wrong, and unchristian, so that it is stamped by wealth, success, or what not. Respectability is the modern synonym for feudal tyranny and moral rottenness."

"Then why don't you say that openly in your columns?"

"I do, day by day. I have never concealed it. But, don't you know, the very people held up to public scorn are the last to see it? I'll wager now that you would be greatly surprised if it

were told you that you are one of the most dangerous types of men in the community."

"What the devil do you mean? How dare you?"

"Exactly. Such an assertion rouses you to fury, I see. Yet I am prepared to say that you, and such as you, are ruining the American character. Let us be good-humored about it, and discuss it for the sake of learning something. You, for example, think me a fool, a prig, and an adventurer. You think me a presumptuous beggar for mingling in a society with whom I can't hold head in money. I don't object at all to your estimate. But you must let me hold my own of you and your kind. You have been bred in luxury; you have gone to the best college in the country; you have been expelled from it; you pass your time in gambling and intrigue with actresses; you will presently succeed your father, and set the world an example of moral worthlessness crowned by the most coveted social rewards."

"Well, by ——, you've got cheek! Do you suppose I'm going to let you—you—" and he measured Fred disdainfully—"the son of a huckstering quack—"

"There—stop there!—say what you please about me, but one word about my father, and I'll beat your worthless body to a jelly!" and Fred strode over within reach of the angry youth. "Your lips soil any name they speak in praise; they soil less in calumny, because that is the tribute the base pay the good. Say what you please of the living; they can defend themselves."

"You will have your hands full, then, as long as you stay in Valedo, that's all I've got to say to you now!" and Herbert's handsome face was fairly frightful with all the unholiness of his self-indulgent and perverted nature concentrated in wrath and hate. Fred had turned his back on his enemy, and set to work calmly, whistling "Upon a Bank reclining," the strains of which did not serve to mollify the rage burning in Herbert's breast as he ran in the heat of his anger down-stairs. He had found a great deal of fault with the "Eagle" before, but Fred's final expression of a scorn only half repressed since the famous *mêlée* at Saratoga, filled Herbert with a desire to teach the young upstart that he could not override his betters. Nor was the criticism of his

adored Beauxjambes, that appeared in the "Eagle," at all calculated to make him forget the moral reef he had run upon in the waters of Fred's philosophy. The dramatic editor, without a word from his chief, had dealt with the French *soubrette* in the strictly impartial spirit that signalizes the true journalist.

He ridiculed her acting and her singing, while her dress and gestures he pointed out as fit only for those Parisian purlieus in which the prurient breed of vulgarity and ignorance were nurtured, and wound up by declaring that no self-respecting man, let alone women, would consent to be seen among the libidinous multitudes that welcomed this form of social decadence. So far as Herbert's purpose went, this *critique* was a triumph. It filled the house nightly. There were few ladies, but men of all ages crowded the Academy in every part. Clergymen showered letters of approval upon the editor of the "Eagle," while his contemporaries, who had received the siren with eulogium and approval, were openly censured for upholding such indecency. The warfare only increased Beauxjambes's popularity. Instead of two weeks for which she had been engaged, she was retained a month, and every night with more vehement crowds and warmer applause. On the night of her benefit she aroused tumults of rapturous delight by caricaturing the "Eagle" and its editor, affording Herbert such delight that he could barely wait until she reached the wings to embrace and congratulate her.

After the play there was a sumptuous supper served for the lady, to which all the rival journalists were invited, and at which the prig of the "Eagle" was scathingly satirized, you may be sure, and the fact published in full the next day. All this, however, was merely capital for the "Eagle," as Herbert soon saw, and he knew that to punish the "sneak" he would have to invent some other method. Among his other ulterior purposes, Grimstone meditated a political career for his son, and urged him to mingle with the ward-workers and State politicians in his leisure hours. Herbert was nothing loath. He could be seen every evening in the Orpheon, a beer-hall, where the rough-and-tumble of the Optimate resorted to meet the local chiefs. Here Herbert soon reigned supreme. His money made him captain of the *clientèle*

without any trouble, and it was here he met the agents that he meant should give the "Eagle" and its editor trouble.

Among others who frequented the place were the printers of all the newspaper-offices; and Herbert was not long in finding out that some of the "Eagle" men were bitterly discontented because Fred had placed a young foreman at the head of the composing-room, superseding an old fellow who was incompetent from drink and debauchery. The new foreman had offered this man an easy and well-paid berth on the advertising columns, generally regarded as the most profitable place in the composing-room. Every reform, even house-cleaning, disturbs habits and engenders complaints. Many of the old printers resented the selection of one of the youngest men in the chapel as foreman, and the feeling soon took the form of a strike: that is to say, so soon as Herbert learned the situation, he set to work to develop the sporadic disaffection into a hostile demand, made by the printers to all the publishers, but with the purpose only of crippling the "Eagle."

Under the laws of the Union, Hall, Fred's young foreman, was himself compelled to carry the Union's protest to the "Eagle." When he read it, Fred looked at the young man, and, surmising the situation, asked him if he would remain in the office in case the demand was rejected. Hall shook his head. Fred sent for the president of the company—explained that it was an outside attempt to embarrass the "Eagle, and laid out a plan to meet the emergency. He was directed to go ahead. He telegraphed at once to all the neighboring cities for printers, and when the committee returned for an answer, informed them that their proposition was rejected; that the printers on the "Eagle" were making more money than they had ever made before; that twice the number of men were employed, and that the present demand was the outcome of caprice and ill-nature, and not for the purpose of righting a wrong. He advised the men to talk among themselves and listen to Hall, and they would recognize the unreasonableness of their action. Just at the hour when composition should begin, another committee waited upon him to say that the printers had decided to withdraw, and in a few moments the room was empty.

Fred could set type himself, after a fashion—so could some of the other employés of the office. They were thus enabled to publish a column or two of matter the next morning; and with type that had been standing, they made a tolerable paper, but, of course, without news. The rival journals came out with their columns full as usual. This was managed in an adroit way. Knowing that the strike would come, they had filled their offices with writers, and men in other departments who knew how to set type; and, besides this, had kept the men at their cases up to the very moment of the strike. Of course, the responsibility of the difficulty was at once thrown upon the "Eagle." The vaunted friend of the workmen! the promoter of social equality! the Jeremiah of labor in its contest with capital! the "kid-gloved snob from Wall Street" was held up to execration as the tool of the rich attempting to bully the honest out of their rights and wages!

The Printers' Union drew up resolutions forbidding any member from taking the "Eagle" or advertising in it. Tradesmen were assured that those who patronized this odious sheet would be boycotted—a word not yet in use—and that the paper would not be permitted to exist. The result was rather disappointing. The next day the "Eagle" made up for its short-comings of the previous morning by a double sheet filled with advertising, much of which it had never had before. Printers in large numbers came from as far off as New York, and the affairs of the establishment went on without a break. The only evidence of Herbert's manœuvre was two score or more of idle printers, a majority of whom had no ground for complaint, and had been forced into the outbreak by a lavish use of Herbert's money with a few evil-disposed members of the Union. Fred offered most of the men good places, and many of them, with the tacit consent of the Union, resumed their cases—the office wisely exacting no pledges, and making no allusion to the recent differences. In the end Herbert's scheme really strengthened Fred's hands, for he was notoriously a believer in the rights of labor to employ its capital—that is, its handicraft—to the best advantage; and the local unions of every sort soon made this manifest by the record of a minute that "Alfred Carew,

Esq., was the working-man's friend, and deserving of the confidence of every honest toiler."

This identification of the "Eagle" with the working-men through its editor gave the community a shock. The great corporations at once warned the stockholders that, unless disavowed, the paper could count on no more advertising from them. In nearly every business employing men, sympathy with the Union was tacitly accepted as a menace to capital and the well-being of society. A few days after the event, Grimstone waited upon Mabitt, the president of the "Eagle's" managers, and protested in the name of all the industrial interests of the city and State. "Any encouragement shown the men," he said, "in their present insubordinate condition, is sure to lead them to license. We are, as it is, threatened with a general strike because we have given notice of a partial suspension of work and general reduction of wages after the new year. We can't afford to have a journal so popular as the 'Eagle' take the wrong tack, and you must curb this fiery young editor of yours. He's a first-rate fellow, but he needs a strong hand over him to check his plungings; he needs some one to cultivate his judgment." Mabitt, whose sympathies were with the working-men, though himself an employer, suggested that Grimstone should himself remonstrate with the young anarch, and Fred was sent for. When he came down to the business-office on the street-floor, Grimstone gave him four fingers of a clammy hand, and a nod intended to be very cordial and reassuring. He adopted a jaunty, patronizing tone, intended to flatter the *amour propre* of the social nihilist, by insinuating a spontaneously conceded equality between parts and wealth, that would put him at his ease. He did not begin at once on the theme he had in mind, but led to it by a cautious exposition of the embarrassing condition of all sorts of enterprises upon which the country's prosperity depended. Then he continued, suavely:

"Let us look at the question calmly. All my interests and the fortunes of thousands of quiet citizens are bound up in these industries. We don't operate them for pleasure, as you know."

Then he went on to point out that any encouragement to those

pestiferous organizations only leads them to demands that it was impossible for those who invested capital to comply with.

"You are young and rash, Carew, and I can understand that you take a young man's sentimental view of things; you think railway capitalists, the grain capitalists, the mine operators, and foundries, deal with men only as slaves. In one sense we have to. I have, as you know, millions invested in all these branches of industry. I and my associates employ twenty thousand men. We give them work and good pay while we have good business, and, of course, when business falls off, we must protect our investments."

"But, while you are protecting your investments, who are protecting the investments of the twenty thousand you speak of?" asked Fred, tranquilly.

"I don't quite catch your meaning," and Grimstone, with a new expression of eye and lip, adjusted his *pince nez* as if examining an unexpected form of the human animal for which his previous studies had made no allowance.

"And yet, Mr. Grimstone, my question is a very plain one: you have millions of your own and millions of other people's money that you feel bound to make realize a certain percentage of profit—in other words, millions of investments that you must protect. To do that you invoke every instrumentality available—Legislatures, Congress, the militia."

"Yes—yes, we watch our own interests whenever they are threatened."

"Very well; are the thousands of workers you speak of less worthy your interest than the hundreds whose money you guard so sedulously? There are, you tell me, twenty thousand men whose existence, brain, body, are wanted in your operations; all that makes men equal in mortal conditions—what do you do to preserve their investment from depreciation? Do you fly to their rescue when panic, trade, over-supply, or stock manipulations, throw their investments upon a dead market? To assure good dividends to your money, you close your industries, lessen your trains, corner produce of all sorts, and, while holding up prices, throw human capital into the waste-basket. Do you give any

concern to holding human capital up and preventing its stagnation? What measures are you taking to see that the vital capital invested by labor is not made profitless during the suspension of your industries? It isn't necessary to tell a man like you, who began his fortunes at the anvil, that the primal and enduring capital of the human family is human labor (for without human labor there would be no values), and that the duty of enlightened men is to safeguard that most precious of all capital, It is a mere paradox to cite capital and labor as opposed to each other—they are one."

"'Pon my soul, Carew, you talk like a communist! What absurdity! Capital—capital? Why, man, there is no capital but money. You don't call a machine capital; and what are working-men but machines? Brains directing money may, in a sense, be called capital; but that brains are not capital is proved by the undeviating failure of bright men like yourself to push ahead in the world without the protection of hard-headed and hard-hearted money-makers like myself and Mabitt here"; and, struck by the exquisite humor of this neat *argumentum ad hominem*, Aaron Grimstone leaned farther back in his tilted chair, and smiled urbanely at the impulsive agrarian.

"You will pardon me for saying, Mr. Grimstone, that you not only take a wrong view of your obligations to the working-men, but you take a ludicrously superficial view of the real meaning of capital. It would take too long to go into a scientific argument here; what the working-men are claiming now peaceably, later on they will demand and then exact it. Their labor is their capital; it has the highest right to be respected; it is deserving of as much return as money. A man at the age of forty-five who has perfected himself in his calling holds himself worth as much per cent as so many thousand dollars, or, in other words, you capitalists have set five thousand dollars as the price of a life when you take it on your railways, or in any other of the many forms money-making has made fatal to life and limb. Very well; you demand on your investments at least one hundred per cent, and from that up to one thousand—we will say for a basis one hundred per cent. Compute a man at five thousand dollars, and his invest-

ment is five thousand dollars a year from the day his labor is accepted until the day he is no longer able to contribute that capital. At twenty a man invests five thousand dollars—at thirty his five thousand is a sum of fifty thousand dollars; allowing his earnings as dividends, the principal still increases every day. Do you protect that? Do you provide against waste in its expenditure? Do you take care that laws are passed to guard against its depreciation?"

"'Gad, the fellow's crazy!" interjected Grimstone, turning to Mabitt in amazement, who was hardly less perplexed by Fred's novel statement of the value of a man to himself.

"No, I'm perfectly sane, and you may as well prepare to meet just this sort of insanity, if you think it so, for every man that earns his bread in this country will confront you with this demand sooner or later, when the millions begin to ask why money should be more precious than human life. Then human life will be in peril, and the life won't be the toiler's!"

"Egad, young man, this is simply incendiary—incendiary, sir! and you ought, as a public teacher, to know better. I warn you that a virtuous and law-abiding community won't tolerate such doctrines—won't tolerate them. I tell you it is infamous—it is murderous—it can not be permitted!"

"The poor make a virtue of necessity, the rich make a virtue of vice. I imagine the virtue of this community would be a good deal upset by the enforcement of other than laws of its own making. It is very easy to be law-abiding when society makes its own laws for the furtherance of its own ends. For years the rich, and the rich alone, have been making laws for the rich. These laws have enabled you, and such as you, to pile million on million, while the capital of the people has steadily diminished in value, until to-day the working-man is actually paying the war debt out of his earnings, while the millionaire is seizing the public domains, to leave in great estates, like the English noblemen, to a corrupted progeny of spendthrifts. We have under the law of the millionaire to-day spoliation; we shall have under the laws of the proletaire to-morrow restitution. Mark my words, the revolution may be slow, but it is as sure as the law of light."

"Well, Mabitt, I wash my hands of all your affairs after this. If you are going to furnish capital to uphold such preaching as that, then we must see what we can do to bring your enterprise to an end."

"One moment, Mr. Grimstone." It was Fred who spoke, and his face was very pale. "You are an old man, and age should command moderation in speech. I can not respect you, but I will strive to be temperate. You presume to come here to challenge the policy of this paper; to talk about virtue and law-abiding. Do you protect virtue? Have you ever been known to give a dollar that didn't involve a loss to some one else? Hasn't the fortune that makes you omnipotent along the whole line of your vast railway system been swollen by such strokes as the sinking of the canal contractor's barges, upon which your whole prosperity is based? Haven't you kept paid judges on the bench from Valedo to New York? Haven't you paid legislators to pass your bills? Don't you own Senators in Congress whose votes you order as you would command a clerk in your bank? Haven't you for fifteen years kept articles on the tariff for your own exclusive benefit? Haven't you paid journals to preach protection as a profit to the working-men when you know that it robs them of two thirds of their wages? Hasn't the Council of Valedo been a mere registry of your decrees for fifteen years? This is virtue, respectability, and law-abiding, is it? We shall, I pray to God, soon see the end of it! You come here to warn me that your displeasure is dangerous, that you will ruin us. Very well; begin the fight as soon as you please! I may not be able to bring you to justice, but, by the living God, I'll bring you to restitution and such shame as will leave you only the resource of suicide or exile! Your power may have terrors for the sort of men you have been accustomed to bully. I invite your utmost efforts, and if your career is not closed in a prison it will be through no lack of effort on my part!"

Aaron Grimstone was certainly right: a species of madness had seized Fred. He hadn't the remotest intention of provoking Grimstone when the dispute began; but, as the man sat before him calm, assured, the shadow of a sneer on his inscrutable face,

the devil seized Fred, and all the loathing and bitterness that the stories of the millionaire's villainies had excited in him rushed in a passionate torrent to his lips. It was the exaltation and delirium of a civic Luther before the nuncio. He might have ended the anathema with "God help me, I can not do otherwise!" so burning was the inspiration of the moment. Never in forty years had any lips spoken like this to Aaron Grimstone. I doubt if the unique incident of the sunken craft had come to his mind in twenty years. I don't know whether he would have been ashamed of it, if it hadn't been openly flung in his teeth as an ignoble act. He was in the early days rather inclined to hear it spoken of with complacency, but force and anger can make even one's virtues seem crimes sometimes; and the specter of his first "deal" came back to him now as something more serious than the long line of adroiter strokes that had enriched him since. He looked at the young vengeance denouncing him, with a bewildered, ghastly expression that appeared like the beginning of apoplexy, and it was only when Mabitt made an appealing gesture that Fred brought his pitiless denunciation to an end. Without a word, Grimstone rose, and, leaning on Mabitt's arm, left the office.

CHAPTER XX.

ALL THINGS TO ALL MEN.

"THE Carews," as Fred's homestead and family circle were familiarly known in Valedo, were a remarkable exception to the life of the city. Mrs. Carew never made what is called a "visit." If her shabby Victoria was seen before the door of the magnate, or the ailing needy, no one was at a loss to account for its presence. The widow's was one of the best-known figures in the city. Her stout frame, sparkling black eyes, deep-set and rather stern, were a terror to the stranger unacquainted with the tenderness of heart that these changing orbs so wantonly belied. Fraudulent poverty, or sham of any sort, trembled when the widow,

throwing back the long folds of *crêpe* which gave her the air of an Eastern priestess, fixed her eyes upon the claimant. Nor was she less a terror to the ladies of the various boards, who joined them in the illusory hope of gossip, display, frivolity. Lord Jeffrey himself could not have cowed the court by a glance more decisively *dompting* than the widow, when the meeting was called to order.

She was universally recognized as a "woman of faculty," meaning by that the mistress of masculine readiness of resource and inventiveness. She had never been handsome, but age had softened the high cheek-bones, almost Indian in their rugged prominence, and the silver mixed in the iron-gray hair gave the needed charm to that serener beauty that comes to some women with age. Her powers of endurance were at sixty as fresh and vigorous as her son's at twenty-six. She was the last to go to bed at night and the first to be heard stirring in the morning. One reason she gave for making no visits was the care of her family, and if its numbers were to be considered the excuse was ample. On the death of the doctor, she had invited a maiden sister, Aunt Cornelia, or "Neal," as she was called, to make "the Carews" her home. She was a contrast to herself in every way. Aunt "Neal" was as slight as her sister Aunt Kate was robust; she was five years the elder, and always spoke of Kate as a girl. She was never known to approve of anything done without her advice, and made it a point of conscience to ridicule, in a mild way, Kate's partiality for the Rev. St. George, as she persisted in calling the rector. Her Episcopacy, though deep and enduring, was not so militant as sister Kate's. She would admit earthly humanities and future salvation, even among the Baptists, whereas Kate never liked to contemplate the fate of those Amalekites, after the lights of this world had been withdraw.

Besides Aunt Neal, there were the nephew and two nieces, orphans of a sister long dead. These kinsfolk were not welcomed grudgingly by the widow. Her house was large, and her heart was larger, and she never found them burdensome or vexatious. She was firm as a martinet with her servants, and adored from kitchen to attic withal. She fed her patriarchal steed

"Neddy," of a morning, with her own hand, not trusting the man to do that tender office. No matter who sat with her in the Victoria, she insisted on holding the reins herself, scouting the capacity of any stranger to understand Neddy's preferences on the road. She had established such amicable relations with this responsive friend that Neddy never knew the restraining check-rein or hitching-strap. She was likewise heard in converse with this intelligent beast, as those who knew him could tell, even if Mrs. Carew's voice did not confirm the fact, by the ecstatic twitching of Neddy's ears, which had been trained into a sign-language, comprehensible to his mistress.

The widow's lines were not, in spite of all her fine traits, always cast in pleasant places. There were heart-burnings among some of the rival Samaritans in the various boards she dominated, who resented her arbitrary sway. For, like all strong natures, it must be owned that the widow was fond of her own way, and, what was more, always managed to have it. But as an inevitable consequence there were subdued rebellion and barely repressed anarchy in some of the vineyards in which she toiled with singleness of purpose and purity of heart. Like all strong natures, she didn't wait for open revolt—she went square at the incipience of outbreak, and conquered before the astonished enemy had taken the precaution to combine plans and purposes. Now, Mrs. Grimstone, though indolent and prone to shirk labor or care of any kind that could be avoided, had set her heart on becoming a manager of the Hospital Board. The widow heard of it, and at once put a veto on the scheme, fortifying her opposition by reasons that satisfied all those who held the decision of the question.

Mrs. Grimstone was, it is true, not popular in Valedo; she was, as we have seen, a perfectly harmless woman, colorless in everything but her raiment, the hues of which, it was sarcastically said, were exaggerated to make up for characteristics Nature had denied her. She sincerely believed that money was rank, and never dreamed that there was anything further required of its possessor than the show of its ownership. She had in her mingling with her "circle," as she called it, heard so much of the animated *séances* of the boards, and saw their members conceded such enviable preced-

ence, that it occurred to her that she might join one of the social sanhedrims, and add to her diversions, if not her social importance.

When she found that her rejection was due to the efforts of the widow, she was astonished, but not angry—that was something she was quite incapable of; she had heard that anger brought wrinkles and other disagreeable evidences of age, and she had never indulged in such a luxury since the first days of her marriage with Mr. Grimstone. But she was hurt in a soft, unvindictive, and quite impersonal and placid way. She would have asked the widow why she had refused to have her in the board, if she had met her when the subject was fresh, but without a particle of captiousness, or tit-for-tat intent. It caused a good deal of amusement in Valedo, and enraged Herbert to fury when it reached his ears.

Nor was the apparent cause comforting to him as a citizen, looking to eventual social and political pre-eminence. Among the patients in the hospital, who had confided her woes to the widow, was a comely young country girl, who revealed a dreadful tale of Herbert's heartlessness. The story was conveyed to Mrs. Grimstone, and a plea made for the wretched victim, but she never paid any heed to it. She had at once stated the case to her husband, from whom she had no secrets, unless her paint-pots, still as scrupulously concealed as on the day they were married, may be excepted. He had promised to attend to the matter, and she heard no more of it. There was, however, I am bound to reveal, another and perhaps (with the widow) more pregnant cause of refusal to admit Mrs. Grimstone. She was known to be liberal to the verge of infidelity in her church notions.

She had not only often attended the "Romish" Cathedral, but—sin of sins! she had entertained the "Romish" bishop in the Grimstone mansion! It was notorious, too, that she encouraged the levity of the worldly when the rector was under discussion, and had been heard to join in the heresies that assailed him in reviling coteries; while, as for Eleanor, she openly sneered at the altar in St. Mark's, and had been heard to call the church a way-station to Rome! The widow, knowing the desperate

wickedness of the flesh, and being a diligent reader of Solomon, might have accepted contrition for Herbert's acts, but the conduct of the mother in scorning was to her the unpardonable sin, that she could not mitigate or pass over. All this naturally bred feelings in the minds of the Grimstones, not calculated to make any escapade of Fred's more tolerable. It may therefore be imagined with what sensations Mrs. Carew heard Mrs. Albion Circester's project of marrying Fred off-hand to Nell! Fred's editorial duties kept him at the office until the paper went to press, generally as late or early as three o'clock in the morning. His breakfast-hour, in consequence, was about noon, when the rest of the family sat down to luncheon.

Of late, Mrs. Albion Circester, who was visiting Valedo, had fallen into the habit of joining her mother-in-law and forming one of the pleasant group. Mrs. Carew was one of the Christians that believed that good living makes good men. She insisted, indeed, on prescribing food in almost every ailment that befell her immediate friends. It was one of her theories that people should eat just before retiring, and Fred always found a light luncheon waiting him on the table in the early morning. He laughed a good deal over his mother's alimentary theories, but she pointed to his plowman's appetite as the most conclusive comment on her policy. It was a pleasant table, with all the ladies and Fred, the soft Valedo coal crackling in the open grate. Mrs. Circester was in high spirits, and told Fred, in mock confidence, that she had great news to tell him when the mothers were out of the way!

"Fred has no secrets from his mother, I would have you know, Mrs. Albion. I shall know all about it so soon as the hour of confession arrives," and Mrs. Carew looked fondly at the indulged publicist.

"Yes, mothers are fond of declaring themselves in that way," said Mrs. Albion, with a sigh, her mind reverting to certain peccadilloes of Walter that had reached her ears through other channels than her son's confidence.

"For example, Fred and I are to be millionaires. Has he told you that?"

Mrs. Carew looked inquiringly at her son, and shook her head

doubtfully. "I hope my son hasn't fixed his mind on riches. If he has he is not like his dear father, whose very pocket-money I had to see to, and, poor man, I'm afraid I kept him pretty close in that," she added, with a twinkle in her eye, as she caught Fred looking at her.

"I'll engage he was kept close-reefed, if my experience is an example," laughed Fred.

"A man can desire money for the good he would be able to do with it," said Mrs. Albion, pensively returning to the subject. "Now, what couldn't such a bright fellow as our Fred here do if he had, say, half of Grimstone's millions?"

"I wouldn't touch a penny of the old sinner's tainted money, any more than I would scorpions!"

"Why, Fred, my son, how vehement and improper you've become since you joined those odious Ultrocrats! Such language is only fit for the newspapers; and, besides, you have already taken money from Grimstone, the thousand dollars—"

"Thank God, not a penny was ever put to my own use! and that reminds me—I will redeem it this very day; I won't be under even that form of obligation!"

The ladies looked at the young man in consternation.

"Why, what new freak has seized you?" said Mrs. Albion. "I declare, you are the most discouraging fellow; just, too, when I had such glorious news for you. I can't wait, and must tell it. What do you think—?"

"That women are the root of all evil."

"You impertinent scamp! Nell has refused Hilliard."

"I knew that a year or more ago."

"What! You don't mean it? Was it at Saratoga?"

Fred nodded.

"Well, she has refused him again. Grimstone's coachman was ill the evening of the lecture, and my man drove for him. Hilliard came home in the carriage with Nell; and Robert (that's my man) says that, when he stopped under the *porte cochère*, Hilliard got out, pale as a sheet, and that Miss Eleanor pushed past him, 'her face all wrapped up,' and wouldn't even speak to him; that when he, Robert, asked Hilliard if he should drive him to his

lodgings, he got no answer, and drove off, leaving him 'staring at the Grimstones' doorway quite dazed-like.'"

"That's very odd," said Fred, musingly. "I went to the lecture with Eleanor. She said nothing of expecting Hilliard. I can't understand the affair; but you may be sure it's only a lovers' quarrel, for they are fond of each other, and the marriage ought to be a very happy one."

Mrs. Albion shook her head in polite exasperation.

"There never was, Mrs. Carew, such an obstinate, perverse, provoking fellow as this son of yours."

"Be careful, madam; you are on dangerous ground. Mother and I are remarked for being exactly alike in our traits."

"That may be. What is intolerable in a man is lovely in a woman."

"Ah, I see!"

"Now, here is fortune, in the shape of a lovely girl, inviting this ungrateful fellow to take and have; and he turns his back or looks sidewise, like a girl between two lovers."

Mrs. Carew looked inquiringly at her son to see the visible evidence of this turpitude; but, as he was smiling languidly under the castigation, she divined that there was nothing serious, and said simply: "Money-making isn't in the Carew blood. The Cary side of the house are the thrifty ones. I should be very sorry if Fred were to let money influence him in choosing a wife. It needn't be counted an objection; but I've lived almost sixty years, and I've never seen a happy marriage where money was the chief consideration on either side; and, furthermore"—here Mrs. Carew's voice just touched acerbity—"I hope Fred will never degrade himself by marrying a Grimstone. It's a bad race."

"He might redeem it," said Mrs. Albion, quickly.

"You might as well try to sweeten vinegar with cream," retorted Mrs. Carew, indebted to the silver pitcher in her hand at the instant for the acrid simile.

"Well, between saints and sinners it's pretty hard to find one's way in this world, that is, if one seeks peace and quiet lines," said Mrs. Albion, laughing, as she sought Fred's eye. As the group

arose from the table, a note was handed to Fred, and, excusing himself, he ran up to his room and opened it. He had recognized the superscription; it was from Nell, and said: "Can you contrive to be in Rosedale Avenue, near the farther end of the pond, at three P. M. to-morrow? I want to talk with you undisturbed. I shall drive in the phaeton.—E. G."

The note was dated the evening before, and had come by post! It was very surprising and mysterious, and he couldn't conjecture its purport. Nell and he were excellent friends, and associated on the most brotherly and sisterly terms, and he couldn't imagine why she should address him through the post, a point which mystified him even more than the rendezvous. The note had been written the evening before, and the matter was premeditated. What could it mean? Then he fell to reflecting on Mrs. Albion Circester's pertinacity in bringing about a marriage. Could it mean that the two were of a mind—that Nell was encouraging him? She had herself told him that a rich girl should have some handiwork in a courtship where her affections were interested in high-minded poverty. Ingenuous lad! The very qualities of mind that made his moral force and practical weakness blinded him here, or he would have seen that Nell's sentimental humor would never have been satisfied with a bold, open challenge.

She had known how to mislead so confirmed an adept in social guile as Hilliard; she could have found a score of stratagems to lead Fred on in love and enlightenment without compromising her own objective purpose. Those of Fred's kind know so little of real artifice, that they are first to suspect the occult where they confront the unknown. He knew Eleanor to be direct, ingenuous, sentimental; he knew that she possessed, or at least made use of, few of the conventions that made society such a weariness to him, and he believed her capable of plumply saying, "I love you—I think you love me." It is the weakness of perfect integrity, as it is the defect of dishonesty, to go outside of the normal in search of explanations of the slightest departure from the commonplace. A man of the world would have recognized in an instant that Nell's note meant something not in the least contingent upon her own well-being, or it would never have been written.

He left the office a little before three, and found himself at the point the note indicated. The spot was secluded; the rush of the waters, as they tumbled over the rocks in jocund leaps, drowned the shrill voices of the birds that in summer made this point of the drive vocal. He lingered among the trees but a few minutes, when he saw the phaeton coming rapidly from the direction opposite the city. Nell was driving, and, as she neared him, he thought she never seemed so beautiful; her large eyes were dimmed, and the humid depths gave an impression of sadness that did not seem wholly the effect of pain. She smiled and blushed as he came to the side of the vehicle, and she said, as he took her hand:

"You are doing your best to look as though you were not dying with curiosity. Get in, and I will disclose the conspiracy," and she sighed lightly and blushed as his eyes met hers.

"Indeed, I'm not a bit curious. Shall I take the lines?"

"No; let me drive—I know where to go, and you don't," and she turned the horse's head toward the open country, along the river-road. Fred, to prove his incuriousness, began an extemporaneous thesis on the beauty of the Rosedale road—half wilds, half avenue, which the city was to honor with a park, inclosing the river, at some future time. It was a mild winter day—quite like spring, so that he forgot the mystery of the rendezvous, and as the air exhilarated him he grew quite sentimental. Nell presently interrupted him:

"I shall have to turn back soon, as we have a dinner-party this evening. Mr. Dorr is stopping with us, and papa has invited some friends to meet him. I must put you down near the falls, and I shall have to tell you at once why I asked you to come."

But she seemed even then reluctant; she leaned back wearily, and let the lines fall loosely on her knees, as the two gray ponies fell into an easy trot. "My note to you," she continued, in a tone of repressed emotion, "was proof of how much confidence I have in you. What I am going to say will show you how well I like you and how deeply I have your good fortune at heart." She stopped and sighed, as if searching for words to go on. Fred was regarding her attentively, embarrassedly. "Papa, for some rea-

son, is very angry with you, and Herbert has asked me never to invite you to the house again. I think I know why Herbert is angry with you. I quite approve your conduct, and so does mamma. Certain things said last night at the dinner-table led me to think that you were the subject of conversation between my father and Mr. Dorr. Papa talks quite freely before me at the table, knowing that I rarely pay any attention to his business affairs.

I couldn't resist attending, however, so soon as I heard your name mentioned; and while the gentlemen remained at their wine, I staid in the room, and I fancy they didn't see me. I made out from the conversation that Mr. Dorr is to force the stockholders of the 'Eagle' to sell him a controlling vote, and that you are to be dismissed, and your place offered to Mr. Hilliard." She turned crimson as she pronounced the name, and stopped, palpitating and choked. "I would talk to papa and try to dissuade him, but I know it would do no good. He never permits us to interfere in such things. He is very angry with you for some reason, and it is he who is doing this. The stock is to be bought in Mr. Hilliard's name, so that papa and Dorr sha'n't be known in the affair. If this warning is in time, and you are enabled to see your friend Mabbit, or find any means of saving yourself, I shall be so happy, because—because you have been so good to me, and you are such a noble fellow—" But she was now sobbing, and the lines escaping from her hands as she groped for her handkerchief, Fred seized them and her hand at the same time, and raising it to his lips kissed it gratefully.

"You are a noble, kind heart. God bless you!—and I could almost be glad that the affair happened, to give me such an evidence of your solicitude. I know I don't deserve it, but it is precious to me all the same."

"I think you deserve it. An honest man deserves all the gratitude a woman can show. You must remember that I don't forget that day in July, when you risked your life for us."

"Ah, but it was not my good fortune to do you such service as Hilliard's!" He stopped,recalling suddenly Mrs. Albion Circester's revelation of the morning.

Nell didn't say a word, and appeared not to have heard the

name. They drove on in silence for a time, until, looking at her watch, she asked him to turn back. "If you care to come to the house, don't let papa's or Herbert's enmity keep you away. My friends are my friends, and I shall always make them welcome. If you don't mind the disagreeable part, I don't."

"No; after what has happened between your father and me and Herbert, it would be impossible for me to cross the threshold; but I shall see you elsewhere, and I shall never forget your kindness. You are the sort of girl that makes a man understand how men warred and died for a woman's smile—for a woman's love."

She gave him a quick, questioning glance, and then grew ghastly pale. Her hand trembled as she gave it to him when he got out, and when he caught the last glimpse of her as the phaeton shot away, there were shining drops in his eyes, that were not part of their usual sparkle. He stood quite still, looking after her, until a bend in the road discovered him to her, when she waved her hand and was gone. "What a noble nature it is! How happy she will make some man! I hope she will get one deserving of so much goodness, unworldliness, and sincerity. Does she love that troglodyte Hilliard, the essence of egotism and insincerity? In God's name, I hope not; she deserves better fortune than that, poor thing! Better some simpering, thick-witted inconsequent than that moral octopus!" He walked on rapidly now, his mind reverting to the scheme for his own dispossession.

"I was rash in provoking Grimstone. I might have known the means he would employ. I had full warning in the fate of Wayne and Blackdaw. What could be done? The half interest in the 'Eagle' will require seventy-five thousand dollars. Where could I get such a sum?" But the more he studied, the more helpless he saw himself. His contract was for three years, and, of course, Dorr would pay the five thousand dollars a year gladly to get rid of him, so that there would be no pretext to carry the matter into the courts.

Mabbit was his warm friend. He owned a third of the stock. If he could get him to work among the other large share-owners! It was worth the effort, and he reached the office determined to leave no means untried to fight the fight to a victorious end.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE HAND OF CRŒSUS AND THE VOICE OF ANARCH.

MEANWHILE, most of the great corporations of Valedo had suspended operations for the winter. The columns of fire that lighted the hills around the city by night, in sign of its prosperity, were now thin air. The clouds of smoke that signalized its thrift by day, had disappeared, and the blue horizon could be seen on all sides, for the first time, almost, since the town was a sluggish Indian trading-post. Ten thousand men were idle, and thousands of families foodless and moneyless. Trade of all sorts came to a stand-still. The public press began to cry out for paper money, and instilled the idea among the working-men that the cause of the depression was lack of a convertible medium.

The land was as rich as it had ever been. Property was of the same value. The crops had been abundant. There was no money to move them. Congress was called on to issue greenbacks. It was even proposed to authorize the corporation to issue notes convertible into national bonds. Every journal in Valedo, except the "Eagle," clamored for this novel system of public spoliation, and Fred was denounced as an agent of the New York bondholders, bent on sucking the life-blood from the honest, industrious classes of the country. Public meetings were held, and petitions forwarded to the representatives in Congress, demanding an unlimited expansion of the currency, and denouncing the policy of specie payment. The demagogues in both parties fell in with the rising cry. Killgore at once put himself at the head of the movement in Congress, and he was followed by half the Optimate leaders.

The shallower men among the Ultrocrats hastened to subscribe to the doctrine, and for a time the great corporations which had precipitated the crisis trembled on the brink of ruin. Secret meetings were held in New York, Valedo, and other great financial marts, and the politicians taken to task. It was too late, however, to attempt to stem the current, and the leaders in Con-

gress, not daring to openly oppose the popular clamor, pretended to push the greenback measure with unabated zeal. It was in Wall Street and the bureaus of the corporations, however, that the real legislation was matured. Popular rage would soon die out, and then safety would return. The only difficulty was the Ultrocrats. However misguided, they were honest in advocating measures looking to the relief of labor, while the more thoughtless were willing to seize any means to oust the Optimate from a power they had long abused. As the winter advanced, the misery of the unemployed became more pitiable. In Valedo, thousands were on the verge of starvation, and the most alarming threats were openly uttered. Meanwhile "society" had never been so brilliant, its excesses so sustained or splendid. The idle workingman in his squalid barrack might read day after day of the magnificence of the balls and receptions in which the rich squandered the thousands that would have fed and clothed the poor. In the long hours of the idle day and in the freezing nights around their miserable hearths, a sullen hatred of the "best," the "respectable," and the dominant began to pervade the most patient and enduring.

Grave men assembled in the halls of the trades-unions to consult on ways and means. To these meetings noted public agitators were invited, and most of them spoke words of evil counsel. Fred was surprised by a delegation that came to invite him to deliver a lecture on "Capital." Beyond a cautious treatment of the subject in the "Eagle," he had never fully developed the theory he had outlined in his unpremeditated outbreak to Grimstone. He was still further surprised when the spokesman of the delegation confided to him that his controversy with the millionaire was known; that one of the employés of the "Eagle," a member of the Union, had heard every word of it, and that his sentiments had made him the idol of the united unions. He was reluctant to identify himself with the membership, as he believed that his best usefulness to the working-men would be in the attitude of an outsider; but as his persistent refusal aroused doubt in the minds of men naturally suspicious, where all conditions seemed banded together to browbeat and deceive them, he finally con-

sented. He was listened to with profound attention by five thousand men, and forced to repeat the address in several districts.

His theory was so lucidly stated, and so directly in the channel of the nebulous imaginings of the multitude, that the unions adopted "free trade and labor rights" as their watch-word—Fred taking care to make it plain to them that the protection advocated by corporations enabled them to keep up prices, and exact enormous returns on money invested, while the human capital invested got the smallest possible rewards. His purpose was to keep the men from riot and revengeful outbreaks, which a few among them had begun to demand. The majority were with him in seeking redress through enlightened laws, when an incident occurred that aroused the most peacefully disposed to passionate retaliation.

So soon as the double crisis, the greenback craze and the union of the working-men, arose, Grimstone had concerted with his syndicates a policy for the newspapers controlled by them. They were to ascribe the depression to over-immigration, the Chinese and Italian, and dwell on the over-production of the last ten years, pointing out the eleemosynary conditions upon which the great capitalists had employed labor for years back. Eminent public speakers were called in to address the disaffected, and turn their thoughts to other causes for the hard times. Hilliard was impressed into the campaign, and a great mass-meeting, attended by the unions, was arranged in Grimstone's opera-house, where beer and sandwiches were to be served *ad libitum*.

Bands played from the street balcony, and the whole square was alive with the idle crowds attracted by the free bread and beer. Inside the Academy was packed to the roof. Many of the leading Union men were given place on the stage, but there was no one to present the speaker. He came forward himself, and it was remarked by the reporters that he was not this evening in the *distingué* full dress with *boutonnière* that he had worn at the Athenæum. He was clad in a sober tweed, close-buttoned and unobtrusive, and when he began with the words "Fellow bread-winners," there was a burst of derisive laughter from those nearest the stage. But he was an admirable speaker, full of the *verve* of address, and

the gift of improvisation; his unstudied allusions and illustrations were the most captivating parts of an argument able, ingenious, picturesque, and anecdotic. He held the great audience in an attention fervid as it was reluctant. He convinced no one, but he plainly charmed the house. He pointed out adroitly the use that designing men were making of the masses, partly as dupes, partly as culprits, and bore steadily on the point that labor and capital must be in the most perfect amity, or neither would gain the end sought in common. He satirized in light disdain the novel theories of capital that had recently been propounded by a fantastic young dreamer, whose education had unhappily ended where that of useful men begins. At this there was a murmur and some hissing. He added, of course brains and handicraft are capital in a sense, but where would they be if there were no money to pay them when they had produced their work? As for free trade, which its apostles were venturesome enough to promulgate in this community flourishing under the blessings of the tariff, he had no fear that the intelligent working-men of the country would help an agitation whose purpose was to reduce them to the condition of the pauper laborers of Europe.

At this point a young man arose in the audience and asked respectfully if he might put a question.

"Certainly," said Hilliard. "That's what I'm here for."

"Well, then, sir, will you please to tell me how it is that, if we are protected in our labor, that we are thrown out of a job every winter when food is scarcest, and our wages so low that even when work is full we can't save anything? I used to work in Manchester, England. I got four shillings a day the year round. Four shillings, that's a dollar. If I worked extra, I got a shilling an hour. – I laid away money on that, for it didn't cost me half to live that it do here. And again, ye see," he continued, encouraged by the nods of assent about him, "nobody could raise the price of provisions in England as yer syndicates and corners do here, and a man could tell the year round what his bread and beef were to cost him. Here we can't tell from day to day whether we are to pay twenty cents or thirty cents for beef, eight or twelve dollars for flour, seven or nine dollars for coal, and so on with everything.

The men that own everything and are protected make their own prices, and we have to pay them. And I can say for the pauper labor of England that I've wrought a bit in all the busy places from Glasgow to Cardiff, and I've never seen the misery and want of this country. You will ask me why I came. I just wanted to rove a bit, for I was only newly married, and had but one child. I heard so much about America, and the riches that lay ready for every man's hand, that I had no peace till I came. I would be a glad man to be back to-morrow at my bench in Wigan, and there's hundreds of my mates that's like me."

He sat down, and a murmur of approval sounded from the whole audience.

"It's a very well-put point, and I'm obliged to you," resumed Hilliard, melodiously. "It is such intelligent reasoning men as you we need in this thriving country, and I'm sure that, in the near future, you will change your mind about going back to the stagnant life of the old country. As to your question, it is hard to answer, for it involves some of the profoundest problems that beset the labor question. Generally it may be said that toil is benefited by high prices. Money is plentier when prices are stiff. As to capital, it could not exist in industries if it were not guarded by wise tariff laws. If the tariff were removed, all the great works that make Valedo prosperous would have to come to a stop, because capital could be more profitably employed in other fields. This, however, is only a temporary condition. We shall be strong enough in a few years to contest the markets of the world with England, and then we shall have no more tariff."

"And meanwhile must labor starve?" asked the Englishman.

"By no means. Capital will share its last cent with labor, as it has always done."

A general and derisive groan saluted this Samaritan sentiment, and Hilliard, flushing slightly, went on, obviously embarrassed, but without betraying any ill-humor. He wound up by assuring them that the capitalists were as eager to see the suspended machinery in operation as the working-men, and that measures were on foot to bring back the piping times of industry.

There was faint applause, and a motion to thank the lecturer

for his able discourse. But this was met by such an uproar that the question could not be put.

As Hilliard withdrew the clamor was deafening, and he hurried through the wings and down the stairs to the street. As he reached the lower landing the floor shook beneath his feet, the walls seemed to rock, and he heard from above a sound as if a thousand voices joined in one quavering, despairing, blood-curdling groan. In the hoarse roar there was the sharp mingling of crashing timbers, like the detonation of small cannon. He turned in irresolute horror, and the next instant found himself struggling under the rush of feet, as a mass of human figures impelled themselves headlong down the narrow stairway. The roar above, swollen into a multitudinous shriek, was echoed from outside, and as he emerged, torn and bruised, into the open air, there was a wide, open space in front of him deserted by the crowd, which stood in a compact, clamoring swarm on the opposite side of the square. He looked upward for an instant, and behind him.

His heart froze to his ribs; the sky was lurid with the reflection of flame, and a dense cloud of smoke stood above the building. The walls seemed to palpitate and tremble, and as he fled toward the opposite mass one of the outer chimneys came crashing to the pavement behind him. He made his way around to the front of the building. Men were struggling and battling in madness and despair to clear the wide doorways. The police, only a few of whom had arrived, could not maintain order, even if they had been able in the sudden emergency to devise it. Mangled and wounded men soon began to issue out, aided by the more courageous and level-headed of their companions. Inside, crash after crash could be heard, as if volleys of artillery or dynamite charges were exploding.

It was far into the night before systematic efforts could be put in force to extricate the victims. By this time the cause of the catastrophe became known. Hardly had Hilliard disappeared, when the sudden movement of the mass in the parquet caused the floor near the stage to sink. The crash was heard only by the body nearest the break. They made a stampede toward the galleries; this depressed the breaking supports suddenly, and the

columns under the balcony gave way; then the two galleries above sagged, precipitating those nearest the edge into the balcony. After that there was no intelligible report. In the rush for the stairways, men, intent only for their lives, paid no heed to the phenomena of the disaster. No one could say when the interior caught fire; but, long before the whole body had issued from the holocaust, the space bounded by the four walls was a burning caldron. How many perished was never definitely known.

Two hundred were accounted for among the missing; over an hundred more were crippled for life. The next day, and many days thereafter, were full of sorrow and woe and terror to Valedo. Even the "best" saw the propriety of foregoing the gayeties of the drawing-room. Public halls were turned into hospitals. Money was subscribed lavishly to bury the dead and provide for the widows and orphans. Subscriptions came from all parts of the country, and Grimstone headed them all with a check for twenty thousand dollars. But when the first benumbing sense of horror began to die away, the clamor for vengeance was heard.

The "Eagle" had pointed out plainly that the disaster was due to the defective construction of the building, and that the blame must be put either on the ignorance of the architect or the parsimony of the owner. The grand jury would meet in March, and the tragedy must be sifted to its first causes. The other journals gave but a lukewarm support to this; but the public took up the cry, and it was plain that a vigorous examination would ensue. It was at this sinister juncture that the board of managers of the "Eagle" summoned Fred to a meeting, and announced the sale of the stock to Archibald Hilliard, Esq.! A resolution was handed him, passed at a previous meeting, in which his services were extolled in the most flattering terms, and the best wishes expressed for his future well-being and prosperity.

The treasurer was directed to pay him fifteen thousand dollars in satisfaction of the forfeited contract of three years' control, and Fred's tenure was at an end. His esteemed contemporaries commented on the event as one foreseen from the first. Great interests like those of a daily journal could not be safely intrusted to

untrained boys and crack-brained theorists. Having put the property in jeopardy, the stockholders, as sagacious business men, were forced to bring the erratic young disturber's powers of mischief to a close, and Valedo might now look for conservative and rational teachings from the hitherto incendiary sheet. No sooner, however, was the expulsion known to the working-men, than meetings were called of all the unions. Resolutions were passed, denouncing the prostitution of the "Eagle," and recommending working-men to place no more confidence in it, as it was now the mouth-piece of the arch-oppressor and murderer of their comrades and kinsmen, Grimstone. It was further resolved that pressmen and printers should volunteer to work on a penny paper, the editorship of which Mr. Carew should be invited to assume, and that funds should be raised among the unions of the whole country to establish a trustworthy vehicle for the promulgation of the working-men's views and purposes. Fred, when the offer was made to him, pointed out the futility of such a scheme. Any organ of any one interest, he showed them, could only hope for support from the interest concerned. A newspaper, above all enterprises, must have the whole public welfare for its platform, and no good could come from such an experiment as they proposed.

He had, however, a plan, which he thought was better. An afternoon paper required but little capital, and he thought he could raise enough for that. He proposed issuing a handsome sheet, which he hoped to make so clever and good-humored that he would get most of his old "Eagle" readers, and with the help of the labor-unions he might make it succeed. But he would consent to no man's working for a penny less than market rates. Presses and materials would cost twenty-five thousand dollars. He went to Mabbit, whose action showed Fred that he had been a reluctant agent in the transfer of the "Eagle," and stated the case to him. He advanced ten thousand dollars, guaranteed by a mortgage on the presses, and within a fortnight the first number of the "Free Press" was put on the streets. It was modeled on the "Tomahawk," and great pains were taken to make the typography handsome, distinct, and attractive. It was sold for two cents a copy, and the first week's sales ran over seventy-five thousand—

an average of ten thousand a day. Fred knew very well that he could not count on keeping this steadily; but his plan of publishing the exact number issued impressed the advertisers, and he soon got enough of this staff of a newspaper's life to assure him against loss. The wisdom of his plan was at once manifest to the unions. They saw that the "Free Press" was read in places where, as an organ of any one phase of social development, it would never have been seen. Fred had been outspoken and audacious under the trammels that the conduct of other people's property puts upon a man of conscience as he was; but his teachings in the "Free Press" were bolder, more radical, and more vigorous. He was strong in a certain vein of jocose irony, that was much relished in Western journalism; and even the flayed victims of his humorous malice were obliged to laugh with him, rather than be laughed at by the public. He never mentioned Grimstone or Hilliard by name; but there was no mistaking his covert allusions to the intellectual Antinous of the monopolist Tiberius.

Before employing classic allusions of this sort, the columns of the "Free Press" were adorned with a condensed narrative of the historical or mythological personages, so that the least informed might see the fitness of the parallel. Hilliard, on his side, maintained the combat with brilliancy and vigor. He lacked, however, the heart in the work that soon gave Fred the victory. Hilliard's pen was at greater advantage in elegant persiflage and dilettante satire. He was not at all interested in the social problems that fired his rival's heart and inspired his pen. His caricatures of the young Boanerges amused the drawing-rooms of Valedo, but they carried no convictions to those who read to be convinced or informed.

Fred, too, had the immeasurable advantage of being an editor —a faculty quite distinct from that of a writer. A finished writer may be an inferior editor, and pretty generally is; but a good editor has little need to write. He can select and direct those who write. Hilliard had neither the industry nor *aperçu* essential to a good editor, especially in a city like Valedo. In New York the editor is just as apt to be a show-piece as a worker; but

there it makes no appreciable difference in the conduct of the journal, because its resources are so great, its space so ample, its news so full, that no one man stamps a journal with his own directing individuality, as seemed necessary a quarter of a century ago, and as is still looked for in provincial journals. There people look quite as eagerly for the opinion of the editor, who is known to everybody, as they do for the telegraphic and local news.

It was a most fortunate thing for Fred that he was an editor as well as a writer, for his enemies did not submit without a struggle to the creation of such a formidable antagonist as a journal that had no stockholders to be bought out in an emergency. The press news, a close corporation in the interests of the Optimate, Fred could not get. The telegraph officials delayed his dispatches, brought them in mangled and unintelligible, and generally hampered the news service until suit was brought, and the operators testified that they had been instructed to pay no heed to the "Free Press" work until everything else had been taken from the line. The jury awarded ten thousand dollars damages, and the company carried the case to the higher courts, where one of Killgore's judges reversed the decision. Fred appealed to the United States Court; and then, as the affair was sure to create a scandal, the company compromised by the payment of five thousand dollars and costs, with a promise to serve the "Free Press" as promptly as other customers.

But still other means were found to cripple him. The railway officials were ordered to keep the sheet from all the trains. Packages made up for the small towns were maliciously thrown off at the wrong stations. Those sent by post were made way with and never delivered. All these evidences of the prodigious hold of monopoly on the destinies of the citizens were set forth from day to day in Fred's cleverest vein, and the fair-minded began to welcome the breezy, free-spoken advocate of a man's right to himself. When these obstacles were found unavailing, Herbert Grimstone incited three or four libel-suits; but he shrank from a trial of any beyond the first. Fred managed to involve that young man as the inspiring cause of the action, and it was a grotesque failure. Obviously, fortune had at last begun to favor

the "fool"; for, in spite of everything, the "Free Press" was thriving amazingly, and the "Eagle" was as plainly losing ground. It pursued the general course laid down by Fred; but instead of opposing and exposing the Optimate, it gently labored with the party in Hilliard's most humorous vein, warning them that the people might, in their exasperation, resort to the Ultrocrats in pure spleen. It was as backsliding saints, not besotted sinners, that it dealt with the party; and the local bosses, for a time abhorred and displaced under Fred's reform spirit, returned unrepentant, if not triumphant, to the control of the local machines. Herbert's triumph was complete when the *rentrée* of Beauxjambes to the local stage was signalized by a column of unstinted laudation in the very page that had once libeled her as indecent and vulgar. Young Valedo remembered for many a day the *Lupercalia* that expiated the "Eagle's" offense and rehabilitated the goddess. The "Free Press" caused a run on the Latin dictionaries by a significant line alluding to the affair as *Lupercalian* in every sense!

CHAPTER XXII.

THE GUINEA'S STAMP.

ANTERIOR to the stages of Fred's enterprise herein hastily summarized, other and occult forces were at work, whose influences sprang from what precedes, and bear upon what followed in this history of economic and social complication. The disaster at the Academy horrified the whole country. Artists were sent from the illustrated periodicals, and, in the first confused reports, every journal in the land pointed out the criminality of the owners, architects, or builders, in the woeful business. But it was observable in the course of a few days that these first indignant and scorching outbursts were modified, and the fact pointed out that some vicious hand must have undermined the timbers, or

perhaps even fired a charge of dynamite! The "Eagle" strongly supported this view. The responsibility was thus insensibly shifted upon either the working-men or some evil-disposed marplot among them! Fred, with the concurrence of the directing minds of the local unions, engaged counsel, and secretly set on foot a thorough investigation. Almost the first *pièce de conviction* that came into their hands was conclusive of the responsibility, if not the guilt, of Grimstone. The day of the calamity Rankin, the architect who had put up the building, took to his bed, and admission to see or correspond with him was refused by the doctor. Mrs. Carew and Mrs. Rankin were fellow-managers in the Old Ladies' Home, and Fred asked his mother to see if she could do anything for the invalid. Mrs. Carew was famous for the preparation of delicacies for the ailing, and her kindly *largesse* was never refused, even by people who could have transplanted the groves of Roumelia, had they been prescribed by the physician.

She had visited the house several times, but was not admitted to the sick man, whom she declared the "regulars" were murdering with their pestiferous pharmacy of irritants. At length she returned, announcing that she had met Grimstone leaving the house, and that Mrs. Rankin had come to her in a glow of rapture. Mr. Grimstone had given her husband a commission to go to Europe for a year, and study plans in Italy for the rebuilding of the Academy. Fred instantly apprised the lawyer, and legal measures were at once taken to prevent this flight, if it were attempted before the grand jury had acted on the information the committee was collecting. Word was conveyed to the architect of the measures taken, and there was no further hint of his going abroad. The working-men believed firmly that the massacre had been deliberately planned, as an economic St. Bartholomew's, and though the evidence gathered by the committee disproved this atrocious suggestion, there were certain traces found of a corruption fund, used to keep members of the Union in the ranks as spies and informers. Not only that, but others whose mission it was to insidiously instill such seditious counsels among the ignorant as would lead to overt acts of sporadic rioting and illegalities that would bring the organization within the cognizance of the law!

The Optimate officials were found to have been leagued with the corporations in this odious work, and evidences of their readiness to meet the slightest outbreak with general massacre were elicited from disaffected agents now hostile to their former masters. These facts Fred, dreading the effect of such disclosures at such a perilous time, prevailed upon the committee to keep from the rank and file.

When the jury was finally empanneled, and in spite of the efforts of the corporations, citizens of only ordinary circumstances were the majority, the investigations went on from day to day. The first ten days' evidence related to the event itself; after that came the inquiry into the cause. Grimstone was summoned; the entire square around the court-room was crowded. He was obviously broken a good deal, and it was plain that he was suffering deeply. He gave his testimony calmly and coldly in the measured tones he always used. He hadn't much to say. He owned the building; the plans were his own modification of the architect's; he didn't think that his specifications had impaired the solidity of the structure. This he said, however, hesitatingly. When he quit the room, it was the conviction of those present that his parsimony had limited the builder, and the architect was looked for with breathless interest. He came to the stand, leaning upon the arm of his physician, and supported by his wife. A robust man of large stature, he was shrunken to mere flesh and bones, and his head fell over on his breast when the oath had been administered. His clerk had the plans and specifications of the Academy. These were unrolled on the long table and frequently referred to during the subsequent testimony. He was questioned for three days. On the fourth he broke down at the question:

"In your judgment, would the floors and walls of the Academy have resisted the weight put upon them the night of the accident if your employer had not ordered the change?"

He looked despairingly at the questioner, bowed his head, and replied:

"What I then thought, and what I now think, you will find set forth in a letter I sent Mr. Grimstone. Here is a copy."

There was a painful, cruel suspension of breath in the audi-

ence as the fatal letter was read. It was, in substance, a protest against the substitution of iron for masonry in the supporting walls and buttresses, and a firm assertion of the architect's purpose to give up the work; for, if built as Mr. Grimstone ordered, the building would be unsafe, and must ultimately crush out the lateral walls, or give way under a simultaneous movement of a multitude. There was a cry of horror in the room. The tragedy had been predescribed ten years before its occurrence! The wretched prophet quailed despairingly in his seat. For a time the inquiry came to a pause. When it was resumed, the physician announced that the witness could not endure another instant of such a strain, and he was carried, half unconscious, from the room. Then followed days of tedious inquiry into the materials furnished, the workmen employed, down even to the nails, bolts, and mortar. The verdict, when the long inquiry came to an end, found "that the three hundred citizens, who came to their death on the —— of February last, lost their lives through the use of imperfect material and inadequate supports to the flooring, buttresses, and walls of the Academy of Music, and that the responsible cause of this defective building was Aaron Grimstone!" The verdict was generally anticipated so soon as the testimony of the architect and builder had been heard. But there was a half-expressed sentiment that Grimstone's wealth and influence would shield him from direct blame. The verdict was published early in the afternoon. The latest edition of the paper contained the appalling news of the architect's death. He had shot himself in his bed ten minutes after a newsboy had passed under his window shouting the substance of the jury's conclusion.

That evening Herbert, passing the narrow street back of Mrs. Carew's in an open phaeton with Beauxjambes, was recognized by a group of loitering young men, and pelted with bits of gravel, stones, and what not. He turned fiercely and shook his whip, uttering a frightful imprecation. At this the men darted out fleetly, and, before the horses could get sufficient headway, the vehicle was stopped. Herbert, struggling manfully, was dragged out and haled toward the canal. Beauxjambes set up a piercing shriek; and Fred, sitting in his room, heard it, rushed out on the roof of

the piazza, then leaped lightly to the ground, and was at her side in an instant.

"What's the meaning of this outrage? Who are you; what do you want?" he asked one of the ruffians near the roadway.

"Oh, it's only us, Maister Carew. We're just havin' a bit of sport wi' young Grim; Luke's got him in the alley yonder, and he'll give him a smart duckin', I'll go bail!"

Beauxjambes, hearing the words, leaped from the carriage, and cried, imploringly:

"O Mr. Carew, dear Mr. Carew, save Herbert from those murderers; I know they'll kill him! Dear Mr. Carew, you were his good friend, and I'm sure you ought to be still. Oh, for God's sake, save him; they are murdering him!"

Moving swiftly over the ground toward the group, with whom Herbert could be heard pleading, threatening, and scuffling, Fred hurried forward in the twilight. The men were gibing and laughing, and Fred felt no apprehension of anything more serious than rough horse-play. As the two reached the end of the narrow alley, the group became defined visibly against the sky, on the very brink of the canal. Herbert's struggles had ceased. He was, at the moment they reached him, high in the air, and the next they could see a confusion of arms and legs sprawling over the water, and then heard a heavy splash.

"O my God, my God, my husband! In the name of Heaven, save my husband! It is my husband, my husband! What shall I do? What shall I do?"

Even while Herbert was whirling through the air, Fred had his coat and waistcoat off. As he slipped off his shoes, he endeavored to tranquillize the hysterical woman at his side, keeping his eye fixed on the spot where the body had disappeared. The men stood by, laughing and joking on the amount of villainy that would be washed out of young Satan by the ducking; but they became suddenly silent when a minute or two passed and there was no sign in the water that the young man had come up.

"Stand by to help, men!" shouted Fred, and plunged into the water as near the spot where Herbert had sunk as he could guess in the rapidly waning sunset. The lights from the bridge

near by fell in long, golden ridges on the placid water. Beauxjambes on her knees, her hands clasped, and her lips moving as if in prayer, thought it an age before Fred finally shot up, a yard from where he had plunged in, bearing Herbert in his arms. The men helped to pull Fred up—refusing, however, to help Herbert; and, when both were safely on the bank, darted away with an explosion of derisive laughter, and the threat that the next time it would be a rope for young Satan. Herbert's body was warm, Fred, taking him on his shoulder, bade the delirious Beauxjambes bring his shoes and garments, and set out swiftly for his own home. It was but a few minutes' walk, as he had the key of the rear gate; he gave the victim over to his mother, who was famous in an emergency of that sort, and presently the young man opened his eyes and stared about him in amazement. Fred had gone to change his clothes; there was no one in the room but Mrs. Carew and Beauxjambes, who sat helpless and sobbing at the foot of the bed. Fred, meanwhile, had put on dry apparel, and gone out to see about the horses. He found two or three of the men guarding them, and said, sharply:

"That's pretty serious work you've been doing, my lads! Lucky for you that young Grimstone isn't in a condition to take any action in the matter, or you would see States-prison for a year or two."

"We wuz only goin' to hev a bit of fun wi' him, ye know; we wouldn't hurt a hair of his delicate head for the wurld. His time's not come yit. We've worse in store for the old 'un."

Returning to the invalid, he found him in his mother's bed, which was near the dining-room and on the ground-floor. He had not spoken a word, but Fred thought he could detect that it was embarrassment, not ailing, that kept him silent. He closed his eyes when Fred came to the bedside. As his mother left the room, bending over him, Fred asked, in a kindly tone:

"I don't think I have any clothes that will fit you. Shall I send a servant to your house for some, or would you rather have your wife—"

"Who the devil told you she is my wife? What business are my private affairs to you, you infernal sneak?"

"O Herbert, dear Herbert, forgive me! It was I, in my despair, when I thought they were killing you—I forgot, and called you my husband!"

"Then you are a damned fool, just as I said you'd be."

"Mrs. Grimstone," interrupted Fred, with urbanity, "I will not remain to mar the amenities of the honeymoon. I see the bridegroom has quite recovered, and my services are no longer needed. Good-night." Encountering his mother in the hallway, she asked:

"Who is that young woman, Fred? I never saw her before. Is she a relative of the Grimstones?"

Fred almost laughed in his mother's face as he thought of her horror if she knew that the young lady was an actress, for the stage was almost as great an abhorrence to the honest widow as a "Romish" altar. Answering to the form rather than the fact, Fred said she was a near relative, and her presence quite proper under the circumstances. He told her to ask Herbert whether he would wait for his clothes to dry, or send home for some. Herbert, it is hardly needed to say, preferred to wait for his garments to dry.

At ten o'clock his mother came to Fred to say that a chill had followed Herbert's recovery, and that it would be dangerous for him to be removed that night. It was agreed that the family should be informed of the situation, and Fred went in to tell him of it. He found him delirious, and motioning to Mrs. Herbert, said to her as they reached the hall, "I am going to send a note to Mrs. Grimstone, informing her of your husband's condition."

"Oh, no—no—no! O dear Mr. Carew, no, do not; for then I shall not be allowed to stay near him! They do not know we are married. It was secret, and Herbert isn't going to tell them until the right time comes." She clasped her hands piteously. "O Mr. Carew, don't drive me away! I know what you think of me. I know what your mother would think if she knew. I knew you wouldn't tell her, for I know, even though Herbert hates you now, what a kind heart you have. I love him—I love him, and I am not so bad as you think me. My life has been what my destiny made it. But I do love Herbert, and he loves

me. Ah! dear Mr. Carew, if you had ever loved, if you were a bit like other young men, you would feel for me. I can't give him up. O my God, don't ask me to do it!"

"But what will his family think if he remain from home all night?"

Even in her misery, a flash of the old Beauxjambes shone for a moment in the wan face. "Who but you could ask such a question? He never goes home at night. He stops with me at the 'Villa.'"

"Well, you're his wife; you certainly ought to have a say in the matter. I will tell my mother—or, stay, you women know how to do these little deceptions best; suppose you settle it with her?"

She snatched his hand and kissed it.

"You are adorable, and you shall not regret it," she said, with a sob of relief. She succeeded in impressing Mrs. Carew with the imprudence of frightening the family at that late hour, and adding adroitly, having already discovered her devotion to Hahnemann, that they would come with Dr. Phlebotomy, the stiffest martinet of the old school in the city. That was quite sufficient for Mrs. Carew. It was bad enough to have the abhorred Grimstone blood in the house, but to have that butcher—never! She would have concealed Herbert a decade rather than that the walls made sacred by Dr. Carew's ministry should be desecrated by a "regular." Herbert's fever deepened during the night, and Mrs. Carew passed most of the time by the bedside. She urged Mrs. Herbert to lie down, but had not the heart to insist against her tearful, pleading eyes and angelic abnegation.

Fred couldn't look his mother in the face when, at the breakfast-table, she broke into a eulogy on the devotion, womanliness, and good sense of Mrs. Herbert, as in the watches of the night the young woman had confided the relationship to her hostess. Her belief in Hahnemann and implicit trust in the widow's administration of the infinite pilules had entirely won Mrs. Carew's heart, and Fred thought with some dismay of what he would have to endure when the honest woman learned that she was the odious creature that the "Eagle," under his own trenchant sway,

had excoriated so unmercifully. But even our virtuous Fred, you see, held that a passive deception was justifiable in the case of a pretty woman! Was there ever a man that didn't? Don't you think that St. Anthony, while muffling his head that he might not see the flesh with the eyes of the flesh, would have taken his staff and done manful battle to save the sirens from the harsh hands of the ascetics, to whose age and imbecility beauty in distress was no longer a challenge to all that is chivalrous in manhood?

Fred, whose joy it was never to have told his mother an untruth, or deceived her, even in the days that jam lured boys of his age into the small sin of fibbing, went to the office quite cheerful over this first innocent hypocrisy. When during the day, however, Mrs. Albion Circester drove up to the office and sent for him, he found the truth of the adage that a lie breeds a lie. He cautioned the lady not to betray the poor girl, if she called; and, of course, call she must, to see the helpless Benedict, and tease him if she got a chance. Mrs. Herbert was in agony when the fine lady insisted on coming in, but Mrs. Albion smiled very sweetly on her, gave her a significant nod, and went to the invalid's bedside. Herbert was less feverish, but weak and languid. He looked horribly embarrassed, but during a moment that Mrs. Carew was preparing an "attenuation" of some pilular substance, she whispered:

"I know it all; don't be afraid. I'll never betray you."

He turned away cross and pettish, and was no doubt glad that Mrs. Carew had forbidden him to speak. He could see that his wife had found means of satisfying the Argus, and he gloomily wondered why he had been such an infernal fool. For Herbert, like many another, had married in haste. The sick-bed was the first leisure he had enjoyed since that felicitous event, and repining rather than repentance was his present plaint.

CHAPTER XXIII.

CRŒSUS ON THE PYRE.

AARON GRIMSTONE was in the bank directors' room when he heard his name shouted by the newsboys that March afternoon. One of the younger clerks was with him arranging papers. He started as he heard his own name, and, turning from the young lad, he said, hoarsely:

"Go and get me the afternoon papers." When they were laid before him he did not immediately take them up. As the lad resumed his place, Grimstone said again, without turning his head:

"Frank, go and find Herbert, and tell him I want him at once."

Left alone, he looked out sidewise toward the doors leading to the banking offices. They were slightly ajar. He touched a bell, and, when a boy appeared, said:

"Close the doors, and, if any one asks for me, I'm engaged."

The apartment had windows on the side-street. He got up and drew the shades down carefully, then he took up a paper. He turned the page, and read the jury's verdict entirely through. The pallor of his face deepened into a bluish, livid blankness until the circles under the eyes seemed bulged and swollen. His nostrils shrank until his nose seemed a mere sharp interrogation-point. He mechanically took up one journal after another, and read each through—slowly, absorbedly, as if trying to evade any mental processes of his own in the matter. There was no comment by the editors; the report had come in too late. Only the naked fact that the deaths of three hundred people were laid at the door of one man's parsimony and greed! His mind began to work retrospectively on the wound he had received. The golden rounds in the ladder of his life first shone out, carrying him in soft, gratulatory, sensuous ecstasy into the zenith of worldliness. There was something jocund and stimulating in the pro-

cession of the airy sprites, as they whisked one by one before his mental retina, massing in auriferous clouds, vague, shadowy, seductive.

He recalled, with whimsical distinctness, sitting with his daughter before the San Sisto Madonna in Dresden, and losing himself in speculating the cost of each cherubic head in the clouds surrounding the Virgin; if the picture were worth the millions it was rated at in the hand-book, then these cherubs became mixed with his own invisible legions! These were the agency of his phalansstery; they had obeyed his magic code, they had built up Valedo, where he found it a barren vale nestling under the shadows of its now million-producing hills. Insensibly as the train grouped itself on the golden pinnacles, a crimson stain marked them. There was blood on their golden outlines, blood on their hands, blood oozed from the pores of their bodies, their smirking leer faded into the wan shadow of joyousness. He rubbed his eyes and started up. What! after a lifetime of energies devoted to this graceless community, did they turn in his old age to curse him, to mark him with worse than the brand of Cain?

Where were his potent millions? How did a handful of impoverished beggars dare sit in judgment upon him, the anointed of Mammon, the brain and architect of a thousand wealth-producing employments? By what legerdemain did a dozen beggars, who had never emerged from the lowest forms of money-getting, affix this intolerable brand upon his brow—he, a Colossus among pygmies, lord of millions, arbiter in courts, Congress, and Legislatures? How was it he had not foreseen dastard attempts of this sort, and fashioned methods of preventing them? He had blocked expedients as decisive and dangerous. He had invented means for stifling the clamors of the press; he had smothered inquiry in Congress and the State Legislatures which would have exposed scores of the greatest, and given them, bound hand and foot, to the vulgar hatred of the sordid masses! How was it he had not protected himself? Then his mind reverted to the days when he had been worshiped as the patron and protector of the nascent greatness of the town. It was this phantom-fleeting, delusive adulation that had thrown him off his guard. A king

now reigned that knew not Joseph! He was to be subject to the laws of the low-born!

He was hated, and his humiliation gave the masses more joy than his early popularity. His rivals, too—Dorr, though bound in golden bonds, wouldn't he seek to take advantage of the shackled giant to carry his ambitious rival schemes?

Just as his crowning enterprises were on the verge of realization! Just as he was about to reap the well-earned rewards of forty-five years of Herculean tasks! Just as Herbert was to carry into statecraft the qualities that he had applied to finance! Just as the dreams of splendid alliances he had cherished were about to take shape in the marriages of Herbert and Eleanor to the ruler in politics and the arch-arbiter of capital—was his majestic edifice to be dabbled with blood? And such blood, the vulgar, insensate mob, whose plaudits and fawnings he could have gained by a day's extra pay!—an ignorant, witless horde, whose taking off was a mercy to them, and a gain to the economy of the community! They couldn't die in their besotted squalor, but must thrust themselves upon him, to leave a murderous memory on the fair fabric of his life-work!

Where was the justice of Heaven those fools, the preachers, prated? He took up the paper again, and ran his eye over the names of the twelve jurors. "Ugh!" he said, as his glance stopped at some of them that had been for years on his own salary-rolls. "Cattle that I've fed from the common trough! A curse must come to the country where reputation is the sport of such ignorant malice and legalized calumny!" He touched his bell again. When the boy came he said, with his back to him:

"Take the *coupé* and fetch Senator Killgore here. Tell him I must see him at once. If he's not at home, he will be at his law-office."

"The Senator was here not five minutes ago, sir; but we told him your orders, and he went away."

"Very well; find him."

He put the evening papers out of sight, and then set to pacing the room, resuming the irritated introspection of the last half-hour. He could get no further than the atrocious wrong done him. He

could see no moral issue involved. He was a humane Samson, set upon by a horde of ignoble Philistines, bent upon destroying him under the vast edifice he had reared in the common weal. But he would not be an Agonistes. He would destroy the Philistine horde, and rear new columns, not for his own martyrdom, but for theirs. When presently the boy reappeared, announcing the Senator, Grimstone seated himself again, and said over his shoulder:

"Ah, Killgore, I am glad to see you!" though this was a metaphor, unless he had eyes in the back of his head. Killgore came and dropped jadedly into a chair at the side of the desk fronting the banker.

"This is an outrageous business! I came as soon as I heard it, to see what is to be done. We can, I think, hush it up, though a verdict is a devilish unpleasant record to go on the files."

"Yes, I sent for you to take the matter in hand. Isn't there some way to prove malice?"

"I'm afraid not. The verdict is based on Rankin's report. If he hadn't weakened, or, rather, if he hadn't been idiot enough to blow his head off—I don't speak of brains, for the cur had none—we might fight the thing. The only way I see out of it now is to let the matter rest until we can elect our friends to the city offices; then we shall find means to erase the testimony and nullify the effect of the finding."

"It would be better if that could be done with the present officials, as they are opposed in politics; the effect would be stronger, and the work itself less open to suspicion."

"I doubt the possibility. There are not enough members of the council that we can influence. Most of them are young men, and are not open to the arguments that bring older men around. I doubt if fifty thousand dollars would do it."

"Would a hundred thousand do it?"

"It might, if that young fire-brand Carew could be made to listen to reason."

"Why Carew?"

"He holds the Ultrocrats in his hand. I never knew a case of so young a man capturing a party. I must say, however, that he

fairly owns their allegiance, for his plans gave them success, and the 'Eagle,' under his sway, made them, for the first time in sixteen years, respectable. I find many of our own people more than half-way into the Ultrocrat camp."

Grimstone rose and paced the floor. Killgore relapsed into silence. Without looking at the Senator, Grimstone abruptly asked:

"If this Carew fellow could be brought over to us, or silenced —sent away, say—what chance would you have for carrying the spring elections?"

"There are two ways we might carry them. Get the unions embroiled in a riot, and so many of them indicted and terrorized that they can be kept from the polls; or resume work, and order the overseers to watch them in voting. It will cost like the mischief! more, of course, than in previous elections, for the men have had a taste of their own way, and will demand higher prices than formerly. Some of the operators and foremen, too, have gone over to the other camp; they are not tied up as we are with ward bosses, who want place, and the men stand an equal chance for office in the Ultrocrat primaries."

"A riot, you say, would give us the day?"

"Unquestionably: it would terrify the sentimentalists who have been captivated by Carew's mad reform doctrines. Do you know that more than half our best people, the lawyers, college-men, and bookish people, are free-traders? I have been perfectly disgusted with the letters I have received, complaining about the Optimate attitude on the tariff. A riot, however, with the destruction of just enough property to make a big bill against the State, will bring these people to their senses, and re-establish the Optimate in the State and nation for another twenty years."

"Well, about this verdict: try the present office-fellows, there will be no difficulty about the sum you name. If you find it impracticable, we will try the other plan, but in any event we must carry the election—that is vital.—Well?" This was addressed to the clerk whom he had sent in search of Herbert.

"Mr. Herbert has gone driving, sir, and it is not known when he will return. Mrs. Grimstone told me to say to you that he would very likely be home to dinner."

When the young man had withdrawn, Grimstone, facing the Senator, said:

"That reminds me, Killgore—the marriage might just as well be now as any time—eh?"

"With all my heart; but Betty says that Herbert fights shy of fixing the day. He seems to be chained to the heels of that actress, and Betty has been a good deal put out about it. My impression is that she thinks Herbert wants to back out."

"I will see that he doesn't back out!" said the other, grimly, as he put on his overcoat, and the two gentlemen passed out, bowing urbanely to the *personnel* who were preparing for the closing of the establishment.

Herbert, as we know, didn't favor the family with his presence at dinner. That repast was taken at the lake, with a party of New York friends and Beauxjambes, and it was on his return from the rural banquet that he was waylaid, as we have seen.

No allusion to the verdict was made at the dinner-table. Neither Mrs. Grimstone nor Nell knew of it. Mr. Grimstone usually brought the afternoon journals home with him from the bank. This evening he had forgotten them; for, when Nell, with the serving of the coffee, told the servant to go and fetch them from her father's pocket, he said, absently:

"I think I didn't bring them," and then turned the conversation quickly upon Herbert and Betty. He thought that it was high time for that young man to marry and settle down. He was thinking of taking a trip abroad, which would keep him a year, and he wanted to see Herbert married and housed before he quit the country. It was likely that he should henceforth gradually withdraw from business, and he wanted to see his children settled. Eleanor started at this, and, getting up from the table, went into the drawing-room. She sat absently running over the keys of the piano softly; and presently, when she was quite absorbed, her father's voice startled her. The room was dim, as the chandeliers were not lighted, and only one or two side-burners half turned on.

"I want to talk with you, Nelly," and, fixing a large, low, upholstered chair by her side, he drew her, slightly shrinking, toward

him. "Tell me, daughter, do you think better of Dorr? Do you feel that you can marry him and be happy? I am not going to put an atom of pressure on you. If you can marry him and feel no repugnance, I shall be very glad; if not, I haven't a word to say. But, before you answer, let me say to you that love-marriages are foolish, and for the most part end unhappily. Your mother and I never considered such a thing; you see we are happy"—he hesitated, as he felt Nell's frame moving with a visible shudder. He added, a little huskily—"happy in our way. Look about you; see the miserable endings of the unions where people married for what they call love! If it be the man who brings the money, the woman turns into a frivolous, gossiping gad-about, hovering on the thin edge of infidelity, or belittled by the tongue of scandal. If it be the woman who brings the money, the man wastes it upon wantons and club excesses, and in the end misery—"

"It is too late, papa! I told Mr. Dorr last night that I could never marry him, and he has released me from the engagement. Though it will hardly please you to hear it, I am sure he was relieved and glad. Men don't think so much of your daughter as you do, papa—don't you know that?"

He got up, startled and confused. Was it possible Dorr had foreseen the jury's action? He was glad to be released from an odious alliance! What did it all mean? Even Hilliard had not demurred at giving Nell up. In his heart he would have forgiven Archy all the wrongs he alleged at his hands, if he had sturdily said, "Your daughter is what I want, not your money, and I mean to have her!" But he had given her up, and there was an ease and apparent relief that, even to his absorbed senses, looked very much like the altruistic resignation with which the Christian accepts the sorrows of his neighbor! In his own affairs, the processes of Aaron Grimstone's brain moved regularly, inevitably, inexorably; but now he was confronted daily with conditions and phenomena that he had no clew to regulate, correlate, or with which he could mentally sympathize. Self-interest he had found to be the key of human action. What could these new conditions mean, where men whom he had gauged deliberately stepped

aside and refused the coronal chaplet of all their dreams and struggles? Had it been the mad-brained fool Carew, he could have reconciled the fact and the motive: but Hilliard, eaten with egotism; Dorr, the breath of whose life was gold, abdicating the scepter of millions! Aaron Grimstone thought for a moment confusedly that senility had stolen upon him; had he lost his intellect, he asked himself, or had he passed the threshold of sanity, and was he in a world of gibbering maniacs? He must have been prodigiously upset, or he never would have asked the question that he now put to his daughter, who sat leaning listlessly on the piano:

"Do you love Hilliard? Would you marry him?"

She turned and looked at him in the dim light, and her arms as they fell evoked a harsh, dissonant crash from the keys of the piano.

"Love him? I loathe him! Marry him? I would murder him, rather!"

"What's this? Have you at last found out the sleek hypocrite and accomplished adventurer he is?" And, in the overmastering triumph of the discovery, he stood and laughed—laughed till his hard blue eyes softened into tears, and he sat down beside his daughter.

"God be praised! I am easy on that score. Do you know, Nell, the horror of my life has been that I should have to give you to that mercenary profligate?—for I thought you so blinded and besotted by his graces of form and manner that you would never penetrate him, never discover that he despised and tolerated you, until you were the victim of his egotism and money-seeking."

"Please say no more about it, papa. I never want to hear his name again; I never want him brought to the house. He is as completely gone from my heart as the odor of that dead flower there from my senses."

There were laws in human conduct, then, after all! He had not counted on this stroke of fortune. Nell might now marry whom he pleased, for the experience she had gone through would make the approaches of adventurers more difficult. He embraced her tenderly, saying, in a sort of triumphant rapture:

"We shall go abroad in May. You shall mingle with men worthy of you in England, and you shall return a countess or duchess or princess, what you will, if you will be guided by me. Think of it, Eleanor: we shall see little noblemen playing about in these rooms, and you shall be the first in rank in this town!"

Fortune's vials were not all filled with blood and bitterness, after all, and he rubbed his hands in a discreetly subdued joy. Eleanor had never seen her father in such a state of sentimental exaltation. It frightened her—he so sustained and undemonstrative. She couldn't account for it, and it startled her. Hitherto he had never admitted that there was any attainment higher than riches. The man that owned the most millions, and knew best how to make them bring more, this was his ideal man. Now he forgot Dorr, his rival co-equal in millions, and hardly less astute. What could it mean? Had the long tension and final disappointment turned his brain? Were that form she thought adamant, and that mind she regarded as a delicate but unimpairable machine, suddenly thrown into disorder? She could think of nothing else that would explain his almost senile raptures.

Presently Mrs. Grimstone entered the room.

"Has Herbert come in yet?" Grimstone asked, eagerly.

"No; he is driving, and I fancy he won't be back until late," she answered, not surprised at the question, for father and son had frequent evening sessions in the private studio alone. A little later, Killgore and his daughter called. As the gentlemen were leaving the room, Mr. Grimstone pinched the young lady's chin playfully and asked, archly:

"When are we to fix the day, little girl? We're tired waiting lovers' caprices!"

Betty blushed, and turned appealingly to Nell.

"You mustn't ask young ladies such questions before folks, papa; it's very awkward. Go away, and talk your business and politics with the Senator, and Betty and I will talk about love and marriage"; and she smiled a little sadly, for she had a premonition that Betty's love was to be sorrow and shame, like her own. Herbert, however, didn't come that evening, for he was lying in fever at Mrs. Carew's, and, if Beauxjambes could hold her own,

his family were not to be enlightened until he was able to tell them the story himself.

It was Herbert's habit, no matter how prolonged his carousals, to visit the bank about midday quite regularly. His father waited impatiently until past one o'clock the next day, and then sent a messenger with imperative directions to find him. The man was gone until five o'clock, and returned with the alarming report that the young man had taken the horses the afternoon before, and had gone to the lake for a fish-dinner. The horses were still gone, but had been seen in the city the evening before. The banker sat in a pulseless, swooning horror. He instantly concluded that the unions had made away with the unfortunate boy so soon as the verdict was made known the day before! There was not one among the thousands in Valedo whose hot hatred of the banker waited vengeance impatiently, who could have resisted a pitying sympathy had the power of seeing the man's heart been given him in those awful hours of uncertainty. It was as if every dollar in the many millions he had brought together had been dipped in his blood and each one rolled away into a bottomless abyss, leaving him the phantom of himself. Herbert gone, Herbert dead! of what value his millions? Of what use his imperial power? Herbert dead! what was there for him to live for? Herbert, who was to have carried the Grimstone genius into politics, and make in the nation's destiny the same mark that he had made in its industries! But, no; the handsome boy couldn't be dead. Surely, no one could have the heart to dabble his young limbs in blood! He was too winning, too gay, too generous! He couldn't have an enemy in the world, and who would visit vengeance against the father upon the innocent son? Suddenly he leaped to his feet, his eyes aflame.

Yes, it is for ransom they are holding him. He would give them millions to restore his boy; yes, his adored millions! He would offer them all if Herbert might be given back alive. He got in the *coupé*, ordering the driver to go to Killgore's office. As the vehicle crossed the main street, he saw out of the window Fred Carew coming toward him from the "Free Press" office, on his way to dinner. A thought flashed into the banker's head. He

ordered the driver to halt, and, as Fred reached hailing distance, he said, in almost beseeching tones: "Ah, Carew, get in here; I want to talk with you." To Fred's inexpressible amazement he held out a trembling and feverish hand, and instead of the three fingers he had never been known to increase, save to money co-equals, he gave him the whole hand, and even retained it when the perplexed young man had taken his seat.

"My son Herbert, my son, where is he? You must know! Is he dead?"

The *coupé* was still standing, and the voice rang out so loud and pleadingly that the passers-by were arrested by it. Fred tapped on the glass for the driver to move on, and, as the wheels turned, he said: "Herbert is still a little feverish; but there is no danger—"

But his words were cut off. The other, relinquishing his hand, flung both arms about his neck, ejaculating fervently: "Oh, thank God! What a noble fellow you are! you saved his life! ah, I know you saved his life! You shall have a million—yes, you shall have a million—you shall have whatever you want. Oh, I'm not the heart of stone you think me! Did they hurt my boy?"

"No, he was not hurt; he is suffering from previous imprudence, and the cold water gave his system a shock—"

"Cold water? What do you mean? I don't understand." He put his hand to his forehead and stared at Fred helplessly.

"Why, haven't you heard?"

"No, I've heard nothing. Where is he?"

Fred had been talking under the supposition that Mr. Grimstone had either seen Herbert, or had heard directly from him. He then told the story, and asked:

"But how came you to speak to me, not knowing anything of the affair?"

It was difficult for the father to answer this question. It would have been an insult to Fred, after what he had just heard, to reveal his belief that he was the intimate of men who could have been guilty of the dastardly designs he had conjured. His wits were his own again, however, and he made answer, plausibly:

"Oh, as a journalist, popular among the lower orders, it just flashed into my mind, as I saw you coming, that you would be likely to know of my son's whereabout.—But where is the blockhead going?"

The fact was, the driver alluded to as the "blockhead" had halted before Killgore's office, where he had been directed to go. The old gentleman pulled down the window, and said, sharply:

"Drive to Mrs. Carew's, on Valparaiso Avenue!"

Then he made Fred go over the whole story again, holding his hand the while, greatly to the young man's embarrassment.

It is needless to say that Fred made no allusion to Mrs. Herbert, and the father did not seem to notice the curious circumstance of his son's driving about alone.

"And you leaped into the canal and hauled him out alone? What a fine fellow you are! And you knew that it was Herbert, my son, when you did it?"

The old man eyed him curiously and relapsed into reverie. This was the man that he had twice launched all his subtle power against! This was the man that he was even then slowly undermining, to bring him in the end to the felon's dock! This was the man that three years before he and his agents had sent into the world innocent, but branded with dishonor! Aaron Grimstone was emerging into a region of the unreal and absurd, that all his astute powers were helpless to grapple with. Then a grotesque thought flashed into his head. How much this boy is like Nell! Unselfish, humorously ignorant of life's realities, but somehow breaking through all the barriers of fate and enmity, if not victorious, at least serene and unscathed. Could there be, after all, such a thing as moral responsibility?—a golden chain which, however tangled and lost in the waste and refuse of things, holds men safely from destruction, even as a rope at sea holds the shipwrecked, though the waves beat upon him, and the rocks lacerate his flesh? Out of finance, Aaron Grimstone's ratiocinative processes were crude and confused, as you see; but he caught a glimmering of that luminous truth which is the life of the world, that it is given all men to see fitfully, and some to know permanently. When they entered the house, Fred left Grimstone in

the reception-room, and hastened to apprise Mrs. Herbert of the unwelcome visitor. He called her into the dining-room, and briefly explained the circumstance, adding:

"It was cruel to make the father suffer such an ordeal, and I feel that I have done wrong. I will now show him into Herbert's room, or, rather, get my mother to take him in; for I can't see Herbert myself. There is a limit even to my patience with that young man."

Mrs. Herbert pressed his hand and furtively kissed it, as he, blushing scarlet, turned away.

CHAPTER XXIV.

"THE REVOLT OF CALIBAN."

THAT night momentous events took shape and the consequences of finality among the Valedo unions. Delegates from all the societies in the State met the local unions in secret. There were three hundred thousand working-men represented. Reports were read showing that, of this whole number, half were out of employment; that the monopolists were drawing the same dividends as when labor was at its best; and that, in the majority of suspensions, corners and stock operations were the cause. Speeches were made until midnight; the sense of the meeting was clear that some action should be taken. Appeals had been made and disregarded. The meeting voted "*en masse*" that arms should be supplied, or taken wherever found, and that the property of the monopolists should be destroyed. As one of the speakers said, "That will give some of us work to rebuild."

The most inflammatory speech was made by an ex-member of the Valedo Council, a middle-aged man named Anthony Blair. He was an Optimate in politics, and had been accused of buying his way into the Council, with money furnished by the Optimate committee. He advised the burning of all the railway-buildings, the tearing up of the rails, the destruction of the rolling-stock, and

the wreck of all sorts of property owned by corporations. This he declared was the only way of arousing the public.

"Look at the French working-men; see how they forced the Government to heed them. They burned all the public buildings in Paris. Let us imitate their tactics, and we shall force our oppressors to right our wrongs!"

The assembly cheered these sentiments wildly, but a more conservative member offered a resolution that the executive committee should decide on the work to be done, and the manner and time of doing it. The vote was close, but the resolution was carried. Now the executive committee consisted of one delegate from each union, and these were the trusted men of the brotherhood.

When the meeting adjourned, the men moved in squads homeward. Blair lived in the outskirts of the town, and quite across it in a direction opposite the Union assembly-rooms. A group of comrades going in the same direction left him at his gate, and good-night was said by one of them as Blair entered the house. At the corner one of the men crossed the street, and stepping back, opposite Blair's door, concealed himself in the yard behind the palings. Another ran swiftly around to the alley dividing the long square, and climbing the fence, concealed himself where he could command a full view of Blair's rear gate.

The bells of the City Hall were striking one when the man on watch, in the alley, saw a light flash in the back room of Blair's house. Then all was darkness. He could hear a door close, but as the wall was in shadow, he could see no one. In a moment he heard a shuffling of dried leaves. The gate was unlocked, and the figure of a man appeared. He looked up and down the narrow alley, and seeing the way clear, emerged, and locked the gate after him. Then he set out toward the business quarter of the city. The man on watch leaped the fence, ran along under its shadow, vaulted lightly over Blair's gate, and running through his yard, displayed for a second the bright bull's-eye of a dark lantern, and hurried up to the cross-street. He was followed, at the same moment, by the man concealed opposite Blair's house. Both reached the corner almost at the same time.

The figure of a man could be seen hastening westward, and the two followed cautiously after, keeping well in the shadow of the fences and trees, which grew very thick on the sides of the Valedo streets, quite to the busiest thoroughfares. The first figure continued onward—once, meeting a policeman, he stopped for a moment, and then pursued his course. The pursuers evaded the officer by crossing the street. They kept their man in sight until, arriving near the court-house, he suddenly plunged into the devious penetralia of alleys and *culs-de-sac* surrounding this most ancient edifice in the town. The two men separated, one darting down the street leading south of the building, and the other continuing to the point where the pursued had disappeared. He caught sight of him again just as he was ascending the three steps leading to the rear door of Killgore's law-office. The irregular fronts of the buildings and the darkness of the narrow streets enabled the pursuer to get almost opposite the door as it opened after a preconcerted signal. When the door stood open, the glare of a night-lamp fell on the figure the men had been following. It was Blair. He remained an hour or more, but the watching men did not follow him on his return; they waited. In a few minutes the door was again opened, and seven figures came out and passed onward to the Albatross Hotel. The watchers followed, and, while one entered with them on the Main Street entrance, the other hurried around the corner and came in by the Valedo Avenue door.

The party went into the *café*, where the bar-tender was leaning over the counter asleep. It was nearly three o'clock, and the place closed at that hour. The two men who had followed Blair came to the bar and asked for beer, while the party of seven ordered champagne, and inquired if carriages were still on the stand. When the two working-men had been served their beer they went out. They returned to the assembly-rooms and reported what they had seen, and gave the names of the men whom Blair had visited. They were all conspicuous in the suspended industries, and one of them was Killgore's law-partner and counsel for Grimstone.

The committee sat until morning. Men were detailed to watch

all the public edifices, the railway property, and corporation plants. They were sent in relays that reports might be brought in every half-hour. By daylight all the books had been removed from the railway freight-offices, dynamite had been stored in the various old buildings which the companies had long talked of replacing, and fire-arms were placed in conspicuous places without guard or lock and key. Comrades in the telegraph-office reported a summons on the Governor for militia to be ready at a moment's notice. But not a city official had been warned, nor any of the city militia made ready. The chairman of the committee—a young Vermonter known as "Grit" Plummer, commonly called "Grit"—however, smiled grimly when the reports were in.

"They mean to have us destroy all their old truck and then make the State pay for it, and of course we would bear our share in the tax. They have laid dynamite where we can seize it; the banks, with their vaults empty, are thrown open. The home militia might fight us in earnest; we are to walk right into their trap, and then they will go to the Legislature demanding laws to bind us hand and foot. Ah! they are long-headed, but they've got to wake up early to catch Fred Carew asleep with more than one eye!"

For it was the artless Fred who had first warned the leaders of the Union of the astute policy of their oppressors. He had been enlightened by one of the printers whom Herbert had engaged to strike on the "Eagle," and, though he knew none of the details, the hint to a pertinacious fellow like the young radical was sufficient.

By ten o'clock in the morning all the railway shops, stations, and rolling-stock were seized by the working-men. The engineers struck—the train-men joined them; the entire *personnel* either joined the revolt or stood aloof. None of the working-men were armed. They had been cautioned against carrying even a penknife. There was to be no violence. The first step was to seize the property of the corporation; the next to negotiate.

So soon as the outbreak was known, the wildest terror was stimulated in the residence quarters and the commercial streets.

Men, who seemed to be controlled by a directing spirit, went about warning shopkeepers and others that sack and bloodshed might be expected every instant. Hundreds, concealing jewels, valuables, and what not, fled in carriages to other towns. Railway and telegraphic communication was suspended. Outside of some broils incited by the prophets of bloodshed there was no fighting when darkness came. The executive committee had sent a communication to the syndicate of the corporation, stating briefly that the working-men proposed holding all corporation property in pledge, and all corporate industry in suspension, until an agreement had been signed recognizing the equal rights of human capital with money or property capital.

The syndicate returned the communication without an answer. The unions met again that night, and again the moderates carried the vote, Blair, as before, demanding fire and sword "to bring the tyrants to their knees." The executive committee's powers were enlarged, and they were given authority to appoint officers if, in their judgment, attack seemed imminent.

As before, Blair was followed and traced to the same rendezvous, only that to-night there were a dozen spies tracked to various places known to be tenanted by the agents of the syndicate. In the morning Blair and these men were quietly seized in their beds and taken to the assembly. Threatened with instant punishment, Blair acknowledged that he had been hired by the syndicate to stir up the men to outrages, which would make the Unions liable to the law; that he had reported verbally the proceedings of the Union; and that he was to have a large reward if he could induce the men to use the dynamite, or seize the arms placed in the freight-station for that purpose. He furthermore confided to them that scores of men were in town pretending to be working-men, who were to set fire to buildings, and provoke encounter with peaceable citizens, to compromise the Union; that so soon as the panic was sufficiently spread, the militia now marching from four directions were ordered into the city by noon; that, in short, a "case" was to be "made up" that would put the unions at the mercy of the syndicates not only in Valedo, but in every industrial center of the country.

The examination was taken down in short-hand. When the presiding officer called the delegates to order, he spoke with solemnity of the crisis, pleading with his comrades to listen with calmness and legislate with prudence; that the designs of their enemies would be fatally fulfilled by haste or intemperate conduct; that while the revelations about to be made to them would be a surprise to a majority, the guardians of the working-men's interests had known the syndicate's deadly purposes from the first. The disclosures were then read. The assembly sat mute, stupefied, immovable, listening with horror to the circumstantial recital of devilish malignity devised for their destruction. When the end came, the president looked anxiously into the faces of the silent company, as if reluctant to precipitate the discussion of such atrocious plotting. The silence grew ominous as well as painful, when a delegate representing the coal-workers of Transylvania arose. He began in a subdued tone, when those in front shouted for him to take the platform.

"We, who have earned our bread and worked our way in the mines, are not surprised by this. It is only the treachery of our own that makes me feel heart-sick; we have met all this sort of thing time and again. We have seen laws made to bend our souls and bodies, on the strength of misdeeds that were none of our doing. We have seen our Congressmen and Assemblymen taking the testimony of our oppressors on evidence made by them and bolstered up by the false witnesses of our own ranks; but we have never, thank God, met men who had lived by the sweat of their brow willing to put the rope around the necks of their mates! Well, we know the worst; now let us act! They mean to make us slaughter the innocent; they mean to make us guilty of riot before the law. I, for one, intend to give them their fill, and I have a hundred men behind me that have the same mind.

"It's no living at all to live as we live. If we speak to ask for our own, we are disturbers; if we meet to talk over our troubles, we are law-breakers; if we join to demand our rights, we are malefactors. So be it! Let us take them at their word; let us give blow for blow; let us see if our wits be not equal to their brains.

They are few, we are many. Let us take the arms they have put in our hands; but, instead of using them against the innocent, as they have laid out for us, let us go straight at the oppressor; let us burn over their heads their ill-gotten palaces; let us trample under the feet of our just rage their wicked bodies; let us spare no man or men who have been bold and open in taking the bread from our mouths, the roofs from our heads! They have made laws to make us afraid; these laws are for the most part murderous and one-sided. We are a majority, we are the law; let us make greed and theft and craft afraid of us! We can do it; we live under the lynch-law of Mammon. Let us set up the lynch-law of common rights; let us make the thieves tremble, and let no honest man be harmed. They have ten thousand soldiers—possibly more. We have half the hearts of the country with us! Let us give blow for blow, for in the end it is death by inches! The more we yield, the more we are forced to yield. As well die now, and in manful fight, as by the fireless hearth, or in the stifling deeps of the mine. They declare war: let us give it to them, and give it like men!"

He ceased, and walked back to his seat, the assembly apparently about equally divided in murmurs of assent and disapprobation. While he was speaking, Fred had made his way from the body of the mass to the platform, and, when silence was restored, he stood before the men, and by a gesture asked to be heard.

"Before you take further action, I ask you to hear a word of counsel from a man that has never denied the unfortunate, or misguided the doubting. Listen for a moment to Father Gagnepain, the Vicar of St. Patrick's. I have taken the liberty of bringing him here, for he is a workman, if any of us be."

There was a general murmur of assent, and the priest, a gentle-faced, gray-haired man past sixty, arose in the rear of the hall. So soon as he was recognized, there was a general invitation for him to go to the platform. As he advanced slowly, the delegates fixed themselves expectantly in their seats, but there was no applause. With a placatory wave of the right arm, that seemed the sign of the cross, he began, in a voice of lingering pathos and appeal:

"Men of sorrow, wrath under wrong puts men in the state of iron in its red heat. No wise thing was ever done in rage. Let us be calm first, and then counsel. Labor is the lot of all. Work is peace. War is the hand of hate. We must turn our forces from that, for that is the weapon of our enemy. As man hates only those he wrongs, we have no hate for those who oppress us. We toil, that others may reap: we must act in such a way that our lives as well as our labors shall not be their spoil. We want wages, not warfare; confidence, not contention.

"It is out of the same pot of life we all feed, and all for the same end—sustenance. Some with a pewter spoon—we are the ones that have that—we dip out our boiled barley, our husks, and are nourished in the end. These others, with the silver and gold, get the same in another form—what matter that they get more, or that they go deeper into the pot? It is a pot, after all, and it feeds all, and it can keep none of us from dying—it can make no soul whiter, no heart bigger, no conscience purer. Let us leave the strife, and the wrong, and the wickedness, to those who know better, and still give their hearts to it. Let us lift our spoon, and, when we have done, wipe our souls from rage, and hatred, and caviling, and all manner of evil that clouds our day, and leaves us no force for the night. If we haven't the wit of those that scorn us, we may have the peace of those that believe God thinks well of a creed of soberness, as well as a creed of force; that it is not want of knowing that makes some of us vials of wrong-doing, but over-knowing; for I'm sometimes fain to believe that all the harm that comes to men, comes from too much schooling, and pruning, and glossing the soul, and the sense, and the word. I've read much; and all my reading goes to make me sure that it is not those that know most that do best by their kind. It's not those that carry the torch of science that throw most light on the feet of the worn—the farer in the rocky roods of the vineyard. Pleasure is the creed that rules, and money is the altar. We that are poor and humble, witless and unkempt, have no place in the service of this creed, any more than the slaves in Rome's lusts, or the pastimes of a king. But bear the wrong for a joy that will come—a joy to which the things of this world are thin and streaked. I know

that fine words butter no parsnips—that the hope of the sight of God won't fill the empty belly—but neither will wrath, and blood-spilling, and hatred, and the mad things that your rage prompts you to do. So stifle your wrath—wait; laws that fail you can be made over; men that crush you can be made to see that your want is their own loss; and when you can count on that, you have an arm stronger than lead or iron, surer than fire and sword.

"Trust me, my friends, I am counseling you in the interest of those you hold dear—those who, with your strong arm, are in sore distress, but who, without it, would be still more helpless. It tries me sorely to say what is in my heart; but, as your comrade and guide, I must warn you that, bad as the oppressor is, you are not wholly without blame. You have listened to the evil counsels of evil men, and you cling to the thought of strife and destruction. Riot, pillage, ruin, and all the wrathful train that have been filling your minds, are the agencies that the crafty puts in the hands of the unwise for their own hurt. Your poor bodies, planted in this ground, would not rise in a bloody crop for the destruction of your enemies! Your blood would spring up in a dragon-brood to destroy those you love. Bloodshed washes out no wrongs: men never see clearer through crime. Death solves no riddles."

When I recall the rapt attention, the solemn interest of the men who listened, the wave of refluent hate that sunk and died, as these words, almost mystical, fell with the cadence of a prayer and the soothing of a benediction, I am reminded of Æschine's saying to the wondering students in Carthage, who were incredulous as to the effects of that tumultuous harangue of Demosthenes which drove his rival from the city of the Violet Crown. Father Gagnepain knew his audience—many of them were of his flock—and the words that he used were filled with a meaning for them that the cold types can never convey. It was like Joshua's protest to Israel. When the speaker meekly withdrew there was a low and fervent "Amen!" and it was unanimously resolved that no blow should be struck that was not in self-defence, even when worst came to worst.

While with the committee, Fred was handed a bit of paper, on which he read, in a sprawling, almost illegible hand:

"MR. CAREW: Won't you give me a minute's speech? I have something important to tell you. I. D. GLEASON."

Fred, recalling the name, went at once to see the man. He had been doing well in his new employment—time-keeper in Killgore's steel-works. Gleason was agitated and timid. He withdrew into an obscure corner when he saw Fred approaching, and said, huskily:

"Mr. Carew, you mustn't ask me how I know what I tell you. I know it! It is this: Watch is to be kept on you through the trouble by several men, who can come into court and testify to all you do. If it so happens that you do nothing that can put the law on you, then worse is to be done."

"Worse! What do you mean?"

"O Mr. Carew, it's your life they want; and if you are in the troubles to-day, there are men that will put a ball in you by accident, like!"

"Why me?"

"Oh, don't ask me! but it is you that they blame for the verdict, and—and—"

"All right, Gleason; you have done me a good turn. I'll take care of myself. I'll not forget your service to me."

Gleason slipped away, as if dreading to be seen. Fred laid the disclosures before the executive council. It was agreed that the editor could do the cause the best service by remaining at his desk. There were men enough to hold the positions taken. It was not likely there would be fighting. If there were, it was arms, not men, that the cause stood in need of.

He left the council early in the morning. The men were simply to march to the shops and factories, take possession peaceably, and, under no circumstances, use fire-arms unless attacked. They were met at every point by the organized authorities, who opened a fusillade and then retreated. At ten o'clock Fred was summoned to the shops. The men held possession, and no further trouble was apprehended.

Fires, however, had broken out in several parts of the city. Some cars, that had been stopped *en route* through the streets, had been pillaged and then fired. Militia from distant cities could be seen on the crests of the hills.

CHAPTER XXV.

A MASQUE OF HORROR.

AN ominous silence meanwhile reigned in the city's center and the residence quarter. As the morning broke the crash of musketry and the dull reverberations of exploding dynamite could be distinctly heard by those listening behind the barricaded doors and the guarded shops and private residences. The city militia had been dispersed on their guardian duty. The men were generally posted inside the walls, with improvised loop-holes to enable them to warn off marauders, for it was looting squads that were mainly apprehended so far from the scene of combat. As the day wore on, however, the wounded of both sides struggled in a confused mass from the river streets toward the Albatross Hotel, where the mayor had secured rooms for the victims. Presently groups of men, not wounded, pressed thither, and it was impossible to distinguish the rioters from the militia and their allies. It was after four o'clock, and the struggle was still kept up at the freight-station, when a thunderous shout, hoarse, prolonged, and blood-curdling, was heard from the combat.

In an instant the broad Main Street was densely crowded by bodies of men in irregular columns making toward the "Albatross." They were evidently working by preconcert, for, on reaching the building, the mass divided and surrounded the hotel on three sides. The leader entered the office, and, demanding the proprietor, gave him an hour to empty the place, bag and baggage. "The hotel was Grimstone's," he said, "and built on the same plan as the Academy." It had been "condemned by the architect and builder, and we are determined that there shan't be any Academy murder here!"

It was useless to point out that the rooms could not be cleared in such a time; that the wounded could not be moved, and that great suffering must follow if it were attempted. The leader was inexorable. The hotel was a death-trap, its destruction had been ordered, and he was there to obey his commands, not to parley. The manager knew this, but hoped to gain time. The militia might reach the scene if he could keep the rioters amused. But this the rioters understood as well as he, and the leader, pointing to the clock, said, significantly:

"You have already lost seven minutes—in fifty-three minutes we shall have fires lighted on every floor. You have been warned; do as you like!"

There were but few people living in the house; many had quit in the morning, when the threatened disturbance was known to have begun. Fred, who had returned from the contest at the shops, to get out the latest edition of the "Free Press," saw the movement of the crowd from his office-window, and hastened out to inform himself of its meaning. He was cheered by the men, many of whom knew him, and they eagerly imparted the purpose of the foray. He dared not remonstrate, but making his way to the hotel-office, took the leader aside and pleaded with him to stop the attack, and march back to his brethren, who needed every man in the decisive and less criminal action on the railway.

"Why, man, it was 'Grit' himself that ordered this diversion after a full vote of the council. I've pledged my head that this man-trap shall not stand another day, and I'll keep my word or lose my head! Talk won't do any good; we're bound to do this thing, while we've the power, and we have it now."

"Yes, you have it, I fear, but it will be costly work for you all in the end."

"Well, we're in for it now. They wanted us to do enough destroying to give them the whip-hand, and we'll not disappoint them."

The scene in the corridors now arrested Fred's attention. Women, laden with sacks of clothing and all sorts of belongings, came hurrying down the main stairs, followed by frightened chil-

dren and nurses, carrying mountains of portable effects. Way was readily and even respectfully made for them by the investing ranks—the men in many cases good-humoredly taking the women's burdens, and depositing them in the neighboring city buildings. While intent on this piteous spectacle, Fred started, as a woman in great disorder appeared at the head of the upper stairs, carrying a large bundle wrapped in a scarlet shawl. He vaguely recognized the face, as he wondered where he had seen it she reached the vestibule above. He started and trembled; it was Madame Dominguez, and he recollected now that she had come on to Valedo about the time that Senator Killgore returned from Washington. The leader of the working-men, Brayton, who had been employed as foreman in Killgore's steel-works, recognized her too. He turned and spoke to one of the men: a dozen eager and scowling faces were raised as the woman halted irresolutely in the upper hallway.

"The damned Jezebel, she ought to be stripped and ducked! It was her work that caused the salary grab and the railway steal. Let's give her a taste of the work-folk she despises so much!" It was Brayton who spoke.

"She's making for the side door; let a handful of us go up that way and make her show herself here. She wasn't always so scared when she could get men to look at her!" There was a fierce laugh at this, and a half-dozen of them filed out of the office to put the threat in execution. Fred was horrified. He felt that remonstrance would be useless. The woman certainly deserved hatred; but she was a woman, and the indignity threatened must be prevented. But how? He slipped quietly into the crowd, and, being familiar with the building, ran down through the kitchen, and up the servants' stairs to the second floor. He found the door leading to the hallway locked, but a vigorous kick broke out enough of the panel to let his slender body through. Hurrying through narrow halls filled with the *débris* of sudden flight, he came out in the broad central corridor. The men, however, were ahead of him. Two emerged from the side stairway, and one of them, seizing the terrified marquise by the shoulder, said, with mock politeness:

"This is the way, your ladyship; your carriage is below. She looked at him with wild pleading in her eyes, and droppe her burden. "Where are your ladyship's wonderful diamond that we used to see from the gallery, eh? We'll take good car of them—never fear."

"I say, Watson, this isn't very manly work for men. Yo ought to be ashamed of yourself," and Fred pushed the man' arm from the woman's shoulder.

"Why, blast your eyes, young fellow! don't you know who i is? It's the Killgore woman—the woman that said rice was goo enough grub for work-people."

"I don't care who she is or what she said; she's a woman and that's enough for me, and ought to be for you, if you had th feelings of a man."

"I'm man enough for you, young fellow! Perhaps you'd lik to test it"—and he again laid his brawny hand on the trembling creature, whose eyes were fixed in anguish upon Fred.

"There, you brute, take that!" and Fred dealt him a ringing blow between the eyes. He staggered backward, and the other who had taken no part, leaped toward the assailant; but, th bundle serving Fred as a rampart, enabled him to evade the blow and gave him the opportunity to strike the other on the side of th head—a sweeping stroke that confused him an instant. But tha instant gave Fred time to seize the bundle and the woman's arm and drag both to the open door of the nearest room. Before th men reached it the key was turned, and Fred was given a moment' respite. A quick glance showed an open door leading from th room on both sides to the next. Directing La Marquise to hurr and lock one, he ran and secured the other. Then he waited t see if the men had entered the rooms on either side. Yes, the were at the door to which the woman had luckily turned the key There was no transom over that door, and they could not see int the place of refuge. He could hear the men talking, and lis tened:

"Do you go for the rest, and keep an eye on the other door I'll guard them well, and hold them there like rats in a trap They'll have to come out as soon as the fire begins."

"What have you in the bundle?" asked Fred of his unexpected *protégée.*

"My jewels and papers of value."

"Could you take them out of the boxes and fasten them about your body? I can secure some of them about me."

"Yes, I think so; but, never mind the jewels, I don't care for them, if I can only escape those dreadful people. Are they going to kill me?"

"No, they don't mean that; they are going to—to—well, never mind, you must not fall into their hands. There are some things as bad as killing, you know."

She looked at him trembling and perplexed.

"Now we must plan how we can manage to get out of here," Fred continued. "Keep up your courage, and we'll find a way; I'm sure of it."

The apartment was evidently the sitting or reception room of a suite, as the furnishings indicated, and if the next were a bedchamber, as Fred conjectured, it might not have a door opening into the hallway. He climbed to the transom, and could see that, as yet, there were none of the enemy there. Unlocking the door noiselessly, he opened it, and found that his guess was right. Evidence of hasty flight showed that the place had just been vacated; trunks were open and empty, as if pillaged, and garments scattered over the floor told the story. In the closet hung various articles of men's apparel. Fred contemplated them a moment; then, selecting a dark suit, he called Madame Dominguez.

"There, put that on, and conceal your papers on the inside, and do it as quickly as possible. I will keep guard at the outside door. Don't be a minute!"

She went into the bedroom, and he returned to the door, where he could hear the guard moving impatiently. He thought it an age when, presently, the metamorphosed marquise appeared, a comely youth in everything but the hair, which bulged out compromisingly under the Derby hat.

"That's capital," whispered Fred; "but the hair will undo us. Haven't you scissors?"

"Alas, no! oh, dear! no, no!"

"Well, we must find a pair. I'll look in the dressing-case."

He found them, sure enough, very small and very sharp; and, coming back, he whispered:

"It's a cruel sacrifice; but it must be done."

She shuddered, and put up her hands, pleadingly.

"Will you do it, or shall I?"

"I'm afraid I can't."

"Well, then, I must."

She let down the glistening mass, and stood dumbly before him. But even then a comb was needed. He ran to get it; and she, in a deadly panic, fled after him. With a few vicious snips, the long locks fell in an ebon mass at the victim's feet. Fred could not repress a smile as she carefully gathered it, folded it in a towel, and slipped it into a pocket; at the same instant a confused murmur could be heard at the door by which they had entered. There was a violent knocking, and a harsh voice said through the key-hole:

"Come, Carew! if you've had enough of that beauty's company, you'd better be getting out. The fires will be lighted in five minutes, so you may as well come."

Without waiting for a response, a heavy blow was struck on the panel, evidently with the butt of a gun.

"Now's our time! You must keep close to me, but not so close as to interfere with my arms."

As she spoke, he ran to the open fireplace and snatched a heavy brass-knobbed poker; and, motioning to the woman to follow, made his way to the other door. Under cover of the noise, he slipped the bolt and turned the key; then cautioning her to keep close, he opened the door noiselessly. It swung toward him. When wide enough open, he could see the guard was not in front of it; then opening it wider, he thrust his head out. The guard was at the end of the hall wall, which ran transversely, watching the men pounding at the other door.

"Come," whispered Fred. They were in a side hall, from which a small stairway led up roofward. At the moment they emerged, the guard turned and faced them; but he had taken a step and was thus out of the sight of his comrades in the main

hall. He seemed confused for a moment, and Fred said, quickly, "Dart up the stairs and make for the servants' entrance to the south when you get to the landing."

"Ah ha! you're smoked out, are ye?"

The man sprang toward the doorway, dragging Fred with him. Reluctant to strike, Fred had hoped that he would make for the room, unless he recognized Madame Dominguez in the disguise. So soon as he had looked into the room and saw it empty, he cast a quick glance at the figure flying up the stairs.

"Ah ha, my lad! that's your game, is it?—I say, fellows—here's fun!—the wom—"

But the call was not finished. Fred, wrenching himself from the strong grasp, dealt the man a stunning blow over the side of the head, and he fell, quite limp, in the doorway. Hustling him in, Fred whipped out the key and locked the door on him, and then dashed up-stairs. He found his *protégée* standing gazing over the banister. She had witnessed the combat below, and said, as he looked at her impatiently:

"Oh, my generous friend, how could I go on, when you were in such peril?"

Even in the anxiety of the moment, the thought came into his mind that women were, after all, half angel, even in their abandonment. Here was a creature to whom he had given the deadliest affront that can be given to a woman, risking indignity, perhaps death, in a suddenly conceived solicitude for the man she must have abhorred! He seized her arm, and fled to the servants' staircase; pushed downward until they reached the basement, and then halted to take breath and reconnoitre. But in a moment he became conscious of a stifling atmosphere; and as he groped through the darkness, he realized that the place was filled with smoke. In a second they could see flames ahead of them, and hear the crackling of dry timber.

"We must take to the stairs again and try our luck on the upper-floor." But the place, dim at any time when the gas was not lighted, was now as confusing as the Roman Catacombs without a guide. After what seemed an age in the suffocating atmosphere, Fred fell against a box, stifled and overcome. The woman,

in passing a spout of running water, had dipped her handkerchief in it, and now held it to his nostrils. That restored his failing strength; and as the dropping water was heard near them, he saturated his own handkerchief, and then each holding these pressed to their nostrils began to grope through the burning smoke, now rolling around them from all sides. Every door in the basement was open, but the smoke drove them back from the portals. At last they stumbled into a dark, vault-like room, empty and cold. The chill revived them, and a moment's groping showed them that it was the ice-house.

"Perhaps we should be safer if we closed the iron door and waited here; the fire can't burn this, and we couldn't smother in such an atmosphere."

She made no response; she only clung closer to him, without an articulate sound.

"Shall I leave you here, and look about a bit?"

"O my God, no! I won't leave you. Oh, don't ask that!"

Fred reflected a moment, and then, taking her hand, pushed out and onward. Presently the heated air came into their nostrils, laden with a sort of delicious, invigorating perfume. Putting out his hand, he felt bottles, and knew they were in the wine-vault. He seized one and broke the neck, but the quick gush showed that it was champagne, which to drink under such circumstances would be madness. He searched further and found a bottle that gave promise of a more invigorating draught. It proved to be a fine brand of Bordeaux.

"Here's luck at last," he panted. "Take a good swallow of that, there's life in it."

The bottle was more than half emptied when both had satisfied their parching thirst. He took down two bottles, and, giving his companion one, slipped the other in his breast. They set out with revived strength, though the roaring of the flames, and the crashing of the timbers as the floors above were consumed, made every step more perilous. The woman never uttered a word; with her handkerchief pressed to her face with one hand she held Fred's arm with the other, and groped onward resolutely. But their strength now began to fail—a part of the floor above them

cracked and yawned, and a deluge of coals fell almost at their feet. Then he felt the grasp on his arm relax, and, snatching at the figure, he found her sinking inert and limp. He still held the poker. Thrusting it between his teeth, he raised her on his right arm, flung her over his shoulder, and stumbled on, for the momentary glare discovered to him the coal-cellar just beyond, and he knew, if he could reach that, there must be a way out, as it opened on the alley. How he reached it he never knew, for there was a burning, lava-like bed before him, and he felt his shoes crisping and burning his instep. But he did get there, and the loose coals scattered over the floor soothed and revived him. The inner door was locked with a chain-lock. The poker soon wrenched that off, and the blessed air poured in on his scorched eyes and face.

Now came the reaction. He laid the fainting woman on the black ground and staggered against the clammy stone walls. She was grimy as a miner—no danger of recognition now if Brayton and his band should come. But he had risked too much and worked too hard to run any danger of encountering the mad host. The problem of escape was simplified, not solved. He began to look about to see how he could get out of this prison, for prison it was. The sidewalk was fully six feet above him, and the grating must be removed before they could emerge. While he stood revolving the possibilities, Madame Dominguez revived and opened her eyes. She got up to a sitting posture and glanced around. Taking the bottle from his bosom he broke the neck and held it to her lips. The wine gurgled down her throat with difficulty, and as she raised her head the light from above caught her eye—the light of day. She nearly choked in the sudden, delirious recognition, and Fred caught her in his arms.

"The open air! O God be praised!" Then she looked timidly at Fred. "Are you hurt? Your face is bloody." He had, without knowing it, cut his lips with the jagged edge of the bottle in the madness of his thirst.

"No, I'm not hurt. I was about used up, though, when we reached this coal-hole. I'm good for a strong fight now, but I think we're all right here. I can hear voices in the street, and perhaps we can attract some one to our assistance."

"But mightn't they be the rioters?"—then she checked herself guiltily, but continued: "That's true—let us call to them." Fred divined her thought—she feared the men even more than the place, but she would not ask him to imperil his life.

"Even Pompadour released Voltaire from the Bastile," he said to himself. "When you feel strong enough we can try our skill here, and if we fail then it will be time enough to take the chances of outside aid." But as he spoke the light was suddenly obscured, and black clouds of smoke rolled down the grating, shutting out the sunlight. A handful of mortar dropped at their feet. "That means that we've no time to lose. Stay here a moment." He went out into the cellar and presently came back with a truck used for carrying the coal-boxes to the kitchen. He placed this on end against the wall and mounted to the top, but even then he could not reach the grating. Coming down, he bade madame climb on his shoulders, and when she was securely fixed there he again mounted the truck. "See if you can move it."

It was immovable — she couldn't stir it an inch. Then he got up again and examined the fastening. A bar was slipped through a clasp in the center and locked at the other end. Taking his poker, he inserted it in a crevice of the wall, and caught hold of the grating. Then madame pulled out the poker, and, hanging suspended by one arm, he wrenched off the hasp with the other, and dropped exhausted to the floor. After a breathing-time, madame again mounted on his shoulders, and readily pushed up one side of the grating. It fell back with a heavy crash. A great cloud of smoke nearly smothered them as they scrambled out on the pavement. Under cover of this smoke Fred, taking her by the hand, ran swiftly across the narrow alley, dark as midnight, to the rear of a storehouse. The door was fastened, and they groped along the hot wall to an open space leading into a canal court. Here crowds of people were busied in precautions against the spread of the fire. The fugitives passed in among them unremarked. A moment later they were on the wharves of the canal, and Fred said to his companion: "Where shall I take you? We are now, I think, out of danger."

Her face was black with coal-dust, and he could not guess what she was thinking. She said, in a forlorn, helpless way:

"I don't know what to do. I can't go to any of my acquaintances like this."

She looked ruefully at her soiled hands and apparel in a bewildered, jocose way.

"That's true," responded Fred, hastily; "I'm stupid"; and he led the way rapidly toward his own home, reflecting humorously on the curious characters his exploits were making inmates of his sedate home, and guests of his unsuspicious mother. He merely told that astonished Samaritan as much of the story as was needful, and, delivering the documents to the lady, ran up to his room to bathe himself. When he came down, his mother had urged the reluctant visitor to take to bed—such an opportunity for the dispensation of her pharmacopœia was irresistible to the energetic amateur—and Madame Dominguez was forced to submit, at least till she could obtain clothing suitable to her sex. As Mrs. Carew's figure was very much larger than her own, it was useless to think of using that lady's wardrobe, and it would take time to procure an outfit. Smothering a mad desire to break into Abderian laughter, Fred listened to the maternal homily delivered in the hallway, as the good lady dwelt on the chance that sent the victim into her hands.

As he was about to open the door, Madame Dominguez called to him. She had washed the black from her face, which wore an expression of blank despair—with more of terror than when she was surrounded by her enemies in the hotel corridor.

"O Mr. Carew, I owe you so much—so much more than you dream, though, perhaps, who knows but I have been the means of saving you from a great treachery?" She paused and wrung her hands. Fred thought the recent horror had shaken her brain. "I must warn you," she continued, eagerly, almost in a whisper, "do not let Herbert or Killgore see you while the riot lasts! Do not go among the working-men! Some of them are paid to bring about your destruction! You are a menace to some men of great power and inflexible purpose. Their hate you have already felt, but their fear is more dangerous. What I know, or how I know

it, I can not confide to you; but you have enemies—men who will hesitate at nothing to either identify you with bloodshed, or take your life. No bravery, no watchfulness can save you unless you remain in-doors. Pledge me that you will do this—pledge me, in God's name, for, if you don't, I shall feel blood-guiltiness on my own hands!—Pledge me, or "—she grew quite determined as she spoke—"I will remain by your side till the end!"

"You may be reassured, Madame Dominguez, I have my duties in my own office that will keep me in-doors, and besides, the troubles are virtually over. The soldiery hold all the disputed points."

On reaching the street, he found that he had come home none too soon, for the newsboys were filling the air with details of the burning of the Albatross; the death of the editor of the "Free Press" and the Marchioness Dominguez. When he reached his own office, his heart-broken assistant was reading the proofs of a lurid mortuary article—an epic of thrilling and weird magniloquence—in which the lost chief was apotheosized as a being of supernatural endowments, apostolic virtues, and a genius for which no comparison could be found. Fred listened, unobserved, as the young elegist read the slip aloud to his tearful auditors, and then said:

"By George, Fordham, it's worth while dying, for a tribute like that! I've a good notion to commit suicide, for I'll never get so good a send-off again."

As is the editorial way, no one looked up when he entered; no editor was ever known to see a visitor entering the sanctum until addressed! Fred bore, good-naturedly, the demonstrative hugging that followed, and then asked for news before satisfying their burning curiosity. Grit, he learned, had been wounded and taken; the revolt was substantially at an end. He had the information verified; then calmly sat down and wrote the impassioned and immortal "leader" that everybody in Valedo remembers so well, in which, while in no wise extenuating the madness and wickedness of the Union, he reminded the conquerors that their triumph was in no sense due to the righteousness of

their cause, nor even the weakness of their adversaries; that the wrongs which had arrayed the working-men in arms would prove a dangerous experiment in the end; that the multitude, even if wrong, or groping blindly with imperfect means, were sure to seize the right forces, and succeed in the future; that the munitions placed by sinister agencies in the way of irritated men had done more serious work than the plotters had foreseen, and that this guilt cried out, not against the deluded instruments, but the monopolists who had engineered the massacre; that while the rioters were willing dupes, the monopolists were the confessed criminals, with whom the law must deal in a Draconian spirit; that the premeditated scheme of making the Union the scape-goat of the monstrous plot would turn the momentary impulse of riot into irresistible revolution; that concession, not vengeance, must close the drama, and that the down-trodden victims of craft and malignancy should be left unmolested to bury their dead and change the misery of hunger and destitution into the woe of mourning; that the victors must cry quits, or, if there were expiations, the rich and ruling should expiate their blood-guiltiness by sharing their evil-won and criminally-held millions with the multitude they had combined to madden. "Do not—this fervid proem wound up—dream of the retaliations you have planned, or you will make the cry of the few the creed of the many:

> **'Lest, when our latest hope is fled, ye taste of our despair;**
> **And learn by proof, in some wild hour, how much the wretched dare!'"**

Against this incendiary address Hilliard arose to his best. He pointed out the wanton and bloodthirsty spirit in which the unions, turning a deaf ear to their benefactors the corporations, had seized the incident of temporary depression in production to indoctrinate a docile and, as a rule, exemplary body of men, to look upon their natural proctectors as enemies; how, misled by the *larmoyant* rhapsodies of an unbalanced publicist, their passing distresses had been made to seem the deliberate work of the great and good men whose interests suffered with those of unemployed labor; that a stern lesson was now needed, a signal vindication of the advanced stage of the century's civilization,

and that the evil spirits must reap as they had wrought; that bloody teaching and bloody acts must be met by swift but passionless reprisal. How it was the privilege of the well-born to teach the toiler continence in times of trial; that while wealth shared the usufruct with the brawn of the land, there was an eternal fitness in the rule of the "best." From the cultivated alone came the precepts that made communities tolerable. That society had during the last decade re-entered its primal conditions, where the graces of breeding and the amelioration of blood exacted the reverence of the lowly and the reasonable forbearance of the high. That while the bread-winner has his place in the social scheme, it is the divine right of blood, birth, and money to wield the social scepter. He ended with a couplet which Valedo thought quite eclipsed Fred's Virginian lines in appositeness: "Deliver up the criminals among you, or the vengeance of law and order will not stop to discriminate, but seizing the guiltless as well as the guilty—

". . . Give them wounds, instead of eyes,
To weep in blood their intermissive miseries!"

But Fred's other esteemed contemporaries seized his dithyrambics to hold him up to public execration as an unrepentant abettor of the outbreak. They denounced him by name as the instigator of the conflict, and Valedo's disgrace. It was he who had plunged hundreds into mourning—let the hand of rapine loose upon the fibers of the city's prosperity; that such a monster could not be tolerated in a law-abiding community; and that if the last scene in the tragedy took the form of lynching, the most scrupulous for law and order could not regard such a result with any other feeling than satisfaction!

But there was no lynching; and it was observed that the "Eagle," which was known to represent the Aulic Council of the monopolists, studiously refrained from identifying its former editor with the outbreak, and even pointed out his restraining influence, and his gallantry in rescuing a noble lady from imminent peril. It was generally understood that strong friends in the enemy's ranks saved the rash evangel of the rights of labor from the hand of the red terror that presently fell upon the leaders of the unions.

CHAPTER XXVI.

"AS THE HUSBAND IS, THE WIFE IS."

HERBERT had not welcomed the paternal presence at his bedside with any tender tokens of filial joy. Indeed, the icy chill of the water from which Fred had snatched him gave him less of a shock than the sudden apparition at his bedside. Ignorant of how far the widow had gone in explaining his plight, he didn't know whether the dreaded time for explanation had come or not. His father's manner, however, soon reassured him. He evidently had no suspicion of either the circumstances of his maltreatment or the relationship existing with Beauxjambes. Never had his father shown such tenderness, such gayety. He prattled to the invalid, who dared not meet his eye, with the effusive delight of a lover on probation. Herbert couldn't reconcile this new phase of his father's character with his past experience. His indulgence had been that of the silent, unquestioning sort: so long as Herbert kept his follies and extravagances out of public scandal, the father never made a reproach. He gave him all the money he asked, and never inquired its purpose. He was not ignorant of the boy's unrestrained dissoluteness; time and again pensions to clamoring victims had acquainted him with the fields in which his son's wild-oats were scattered. That, however, troubled him very little.

He saw other men in his own condition made uncomfortable by the follies of sons that money couldn't always hush up or terminate. He was quite willing that the boy should have his "fling," providing that he kept clear of compromising alliances. He had told him so often, and on this condition had made him very liberal allowances. It was the knowledge of his father's sentiments that now troubled the young man's mind, and, as he tossed on his pillow day and night, he cursed himself for slipping the noose over his own neck. He had married Beauxjambes in the euthanasia of champagne and rivalry. A comrade, the son of a New York millionaire, had become enamored of the *soubrette*. He had lavished the most costly presents on her. It was made a matter of boasting which of the two young Plutocrats would carry off Pro-

serpine, and Herbert, insanely jealous, irritated by opposition, had won, by the proffer of the altar, when the other had gone only so far as a settlement, a town-house, and a Saratoga villa! The young lady, familiar with the fragile tenure of such amours, with much affectation of coy reluctance, finally consented, and a clergyman in a small village near Valedo unhesitatingly performed the ceremony. The honeymoon was now past, however, and Herbert had already begun to look his rashness in the face.

He was engaged to Betty Killgore, as long as he could remember, and he knew that the acknowledgment of his union with Beauxjambes would bring misery into the Senator's household as well as dismay into his own. His wife, too, had acquainted him with the first symptom of moral restraint he had ever known. She had surprised him embracing one of the damsels of the troupe, and had there and then pulled the young woman's hair, and forced the manager to chase her from the company. She had, too, a way of asking an account of his goings out and comings in, which maddened a young man who had never been asked to give an account of himself since his nursling days. Violent scenes had, as a matter of course, followed, made up by tears and sullen embraces. As his passion for the girl cooled, hers for him became a maddening adoration. His beauty fascinated her from the first, for he was a markedly handsome man. His figure was good, his limbs well formed, his hands shapely, his complexion brilliant, his eyes a liquid brown, his eyebrows arched, graceful, and delicately penciled, his lips carmine, full and sensuous, his expression a seductive languor, irresistible to women of a certain type. The actress adored him with that curious adoration often seen in women who have led a public life, for men who take them from it. She would have borne every form of the caprice such natures as Herbert's exhibit, if she could have counted on his fidelity; she saw with anguish that the same animal attraction that made her his slave, drew other women to him, if he but looked at them. She had begun by resenting his infidelities, in the artless poutings and turbulent outbursts that women resort to when they feel strong in their power; but she soon saw that his promises were hollow, and his penitence a sham.

Then she had uttered threats: she would leave him, she

would throw herself into the arms of Van Argent, the rival from whom he had snatched her. He coldly shrugged his shoulders and bade her try it. Then she had stormed and threatened, and he had struck her, and then she had loved him the more! She rose from the floor where his blow had sent her reeling, and clung to him, sobbing and pleading forgiveness! Thenceforth she was so submissively his slave that he chafed more and more at the insanity that had bound him to her. An undercurrent like this in the life of an elegant young man not yet twenty-five was not, as you see, calculated to give him the ease his responsibilities and advantages demanded, when his father set before him the plans we have heard him outline to Killgore. There was no reason the marriage with Betty should be longer deferred. He must arrange with that young lady at once, and have the affair well over before the departure of Mr. Grimstone and Nell for Europe. He should remain and take hold of such enterprises as he had taste for.

Herbert listened with angry impatience. He cursed his folly, and cursed his wife. If he could only stave off the discovery, he could perhaps get a divorce! The law was happily lax for such victims as himself, and he gave his mind to devising a line of conduct that would bring him out of the meshes. When his father had gone, Beauxjambes was struck dumb by the look the invalid gave her. She asked in terror if "the papa" knew. "Of course not. Don't be a fool; one fool in the family's enough!" he muttered, turning gloomily toward the wall. She sat down timidly by the bed, and her hand crept under the clothes to find his. He snatched it away irritably, and bundled the coverlet about him. Poor thing! she blamed herself; the papa had been lecturing the victim, and she was the cause, even though the marriage was not known. But, oh! if the papa only knew how she loved the handsome fellow, how she would be his slave, how she would never murmur, no matter what freak led him from her! If she could but have him to nurse, to fondle, to brush the soft hair from the brow, to kiss the strong hand, to hold him in her arms, and press to her aching heart, she would ask no more. He had fallen asleep; now she rose and pressed her hot lips to his beautiful brow. He murmured in his sleep:

"Damn fool! damn fool!"

She knelt down softly beside the bed and sobbed quietly. Presently the door opened, Mrs. Carew looked in, but did not look at the bed; she said, in a low voice, not observing the kneeling figure:

"Yes, Miss Grimstone, you may go in, but don't disturb him until he wakes."

As Nell entered the room, the wife from the other side of the bed raised her head. The two women confronted each other alone in the room. Mrs. Herbert started up and stood trembling. Nell recognized her in an instant. In the early days of his infatuation Herbert had taken his sister to the theatre where she was playing, and once in Valedo. She glanced at the bed, and then at the panic-stricken wife. In the first indignant shock she made a movement to open the door, with a haughty, imperious gesture; the wife, gliding toward her, held up her hand beseechingly. Nell paused, struck by the indescribable pathos and pleading in the attitude; but she drew her robe back insultingly as the other reached her. The act, the refinement of a pure woman's intolerance and a proud woman's assertion of her status, was realized in all its subtile significance by the other. The humility, abject, imploring, vanished from her face; she drew herself up with a dignity, even majesty, innate only in those who have felt the sanctifying benediction of unselfish love, and she said, with a composure strongly in contrast with Nell's agitation:

"Madame, I have a right to be here, stronger than yours. I have the right of a wife!"

The words were hardly louder than a whisper, but their intensity vibrated the close air of the sick-room, and Herbert started up and caught sight of the two figures.

"Eleanor, is that you? Good God!"

With a little cry she fled past the wife, upon whom Herbert's voice had fallen like a withering blight, and flung herself into his arms hysterically, as the other, opening the door, softly passed out. Next to himself, Herbert was fond of his sister, and he submitted graciously to the embraces that seemed to grow in fervor, as the confused thought of the declaration she had just heard began to take shape in certainty.

"O Bert! is it true? Is that—that creature—are you married to that woman?"

"Damn it, Nell! who told you that? Does father know? Have these damned people in the house been publishing it in the streets? I might have known that sneak Carew would make all he could of it. Damn him!"

"Herbert! Herbert! how can you talk so? No one knows but myself; I—"

She was going to tell that the wife herself had made it known to her; but, knowing her brother, and realizing now that he had enjoined secrecy, with a woman's quick divination, she knew that his wrath would be vented on the wretched wife, if she betrayed the confession that her own (Nell's) demeanor had extorted. With the eye of a woman that had loved, she saw that Beauxjambes adored her brother, and, with the impulse of a woman that had loved in vain, she took the side of the unhappy.

"I found it out by means you would never suspect. I alone know it; and if it is for your interest to keep it secret for a time, you need not fear that I will let it be known."

Herbert at once attributed the betrayal to Mrs. Carew, who had not, in fact, been asked to conceal it, and would naturally enough suppose that Nell knew. There was, after all, no harm done, as he had been on the point of taking Nell into his confidence, to enable him the better to evade the awkward questions as to his whereabout and prolonged absence from home. Nell told him all the news, the progress of the riot, and her father's strange conduct, which at first she could not account for until she had heard of the verdict, through a neighbor, who came innocently to commiserate with the family, and denounce the insolence of the jury.

"Mamma," she added, "is quite broken down under the affair, or she would have come with me."

Herbert remarked dutifully that it was quite as well she hadn't come, looking significantly over his shoulder toward the door.

"But it must be known some time, Bert, and why not tell mamma? She will make the best of it. since it will do no good to do anvthing else."

"Don't be silly, Nell! Do you want to drive me wild?" Then, looking at her, and dropping his voice, "Perhaps she need never know; perhaps I can get out of it."

"Good Heavens, Bert!—what do you mean?"

"I mean just what I say: because I was a fool, I needn't continue a fool, and before long, perhaps, I shall be free again."

"Free? What do you mean?"

"Oh, never mind; you wouldn't understand if I told you."

"But don't you love—what is her first name?"

"Mélanie."

"What a pretty name! and she is really lovely. I don't blame you for falling in love; but—"

"But what?"

Now Nell's thought was, "How could she fall in love with you?" for, though she was fond of him, and knew that he was a handsome fellow, she was not ignorant either of his selfishness or his incapacity to love deeply and sincerely. The look in Mélanie's eyes was enough for her to see that, while Herbert might have chosen more wisely, looking at his worldly position, he could not have gained a more unselfish devotion than this poor girl lavished upon him.

"But what?"

"Oh, how could you be so rash? What will Senator Killgore say? And poor Betty, she thinks of you by day, and dreams of you by night! She has been radiant since papa told her the day must be fixed this spring."

Herbert winced a little at this, and pulled the coverlet up to his neck, as though a sudden chill had come upon him.

"Killgore I don't mind. He'll probably find himself in the same boat one of these days. Betty needn't know anything about it; when the day comes, I shall be ready."

"Ready? Are you dreaming?"

"I'm going to break this cursed marriage: I was an eternal fool ever to let myself be caught, but I'm not going to be idiot enough to stay caught."

"Herbert, Herbert, she loves you, tenderly and devotedly, and she is your wife; you must face the fact like a man. Don't dream

of such baseness. I should disown you. Papa will be deeply grieved, for he has set his heart on your marrying Betty, but he's not the cold, exacting man he was, and I'm sure I can reconcile him to the marriage."

"You'll be good enough to keep the affair to yourself. That's the way with all women: they enjoy trapping a man themselves, and next to that they enjoy another woman making a fool of him."

Nell's own thoughts at the moment were far away. She had run a chance of having the same speech made about herself. The coincidence did not, you may be sure, lessen her growing sympathy with the poor girl for whom this odious treason was planning. She said nothing, however. She knew Herbert too well to waste words. She resolved to make a reconciliation between the wife and father, and prevent wrong being added to folly.

Herbert had been writing at intervals upon a tablet, on which Mrs. Carew left the hours for each of the medicaments. He folded the sheet, and, when enveloped and addressed, asked his sister to have it sent to an address which she recognized as that of a lawyer notorious in divorce suits. As she was ready to go, she rang the bell, and, when the servant came, asked to see Mrs. Carew. She stepped into the hall to meet her, and, having thanked her for her care of Herbert, asked for Mrs. Herbert. She took her seat in the reception-room, while Mrs. Carew went in search of Mélanie, who appeared a moment later. Nell rose as she entered, and held out her hand amicably.

"You are my brother's wife. The marriage may not have been prudent, but it is too late now to think of that. I am Herbert's sister, and if you will let me I will be yours, for I know you love him, and that, after all, is the greatest happiness a man can gain. Oh, don't—don't!"—(for the *hauteur* which Mélanie had assumed, to confront the arrogant kinswoman of her husband, melted into tender frenzy under this kind speech, and she fell on her knees, kissing the hem of the other's garment, only daring to touch her lips in the end to Nell's hand)—"no, you shall not," and, bending over, Nell touched her lips to the wife's forehead.

"It is enough for me that you love him, Mélanie—what a pretty name!—and how lovely you are! I can see how no man could resist loving you. My name is Eleanor for you, and you shall be Mélanie for me, *n'est-ce pas!*"

"Ah, *mon Dieu*, what an angel you are, how worthy to be the dear Herbert's sister! Oh, he will be so happy now, that the—the affair is *dénoué* for you, and perhaps you will intercede for us, for I am so unhappy that he is not in confidence with the father."

"You may trust me, Mélanie; I will try to avert disaster from your love, even though it be not wise."

"Oh, how could one be wiser than loving such an adorable boy, so good, so handsome, so—so—" But the poor thing could not add the terms that came to her mind, for even her love was not blind to Herbert's selfishness, and certain other memories were evoked by the enumeration of the youth's virtues. So the two parted, the one pitying and compassionate, the other radiant with the light of a new life in her lovely eyes, and buoyant trust in her heart. When she went into the sick-room, Herbert was up and dressed. She looked at him in amazement. "Why, Bertie, how imprudent! What will Mrs. Carew say?"

"I don't care what the old fool says; I'm not going to lie here any longer. Besides, the family will be coming to the house all the time, and your cursed obstinacy will make everything known. I'm going home, and you must go like a reasonable woman, and wait until I can get out again all right. You needn't make a scene; it won't do any good. I'm going to do just what I say. Just ask Mrs. Carew to have the horses taken out, and lend me her man to drive home." But Mélanie sat quite dumb and still. She knew that there was something besides the desire to get home in this sudden determination. What it was she had no suspicion; but that her love was in jeopardy she dimly felt. Before she could act or think, Mrs. Carew came in, and started in surprise when she saw Herbert up and dressed. He told her in a few words that he was well, and couldn't think of trespassing on her any longer, and, thanks to her invaluable and wonderful prescriptions, he would pull himself together in a day or two. So the carriage was brought around, and Mélanie, in an agony of desolation, sobbed *au revoir*

on his restive neck. He drove straight home. As he entered the vestibule, Killgore, flushed and trembling, came out. He gave the young man a look of concentrated hatred and scorn, and brushed past him as he held out his hand.

"Don't offer me your hand, you contemptible puppy! give it to your actress, where it belongs!" and with that he strode down the steps.

Herbert was stunned. "It's all over!" he muttered, and was going to sneak up to his room, when he heard a shriek in the library. He made his way thither. His sister was on her knees, holding her father's head in her arms. She didn't look up as Herbert entered, but hearing the step, she said, huskily and frightened:

"Send for Dr. Arkwright; don't delay a minute!"

Herbert slipped out, sent a servant, and returned to the room. Nell looked up this time. She did not seem surprised, but beckoned her brother to help her put the inanimate body of the father on the couch. It was done with difficulty. He breathed heavily, and Herbert saw that it was a shock of paralysis. Herbert divined that Killgore had something to do with it, and concluded that he had come to reproach the father with the son's conduct, which was the fact. Killgore had heard the story indirectly from Van Argent's friends, and on inquiry found its truth.

Aaron Grimstone passed a precarious day and night, but at the end of twenty-four hours was pronounced out of danger. One of his arms was stricken dead, but his intellect was unimpaired. The third day Herbert was admitted to the sick-room with the doctor. His father was lying tranquilly on the bed, Nell sitting beside it. He did not look around as the doctor entered.

"You see, Herbert, he is all right now," said the doctor, cheerily.

At the sound of his son's name, the invalid's face contracted horribly. He raised himself in the bed and glared toward him; then, raising his unimpaired arm, he pointed to the door.

"Go out, you dog! you selfish, low-lived ingrate! quit this house; quit my sight; you are no son of mine! Go rot in the slime you have wallowed in; you are no son of mine, and not a

penny of mine shall go to keep you in the slums you have chosen! Go, I say, you ruffian—go, before I call the servants to put you out!—"

The last words were almost a shriek, and the livid face was distorted so frightfully that the doctor himself, seizing Herbert by the shoulder and hurrying him to the door, groaned:

"Why didn't you tell me? You have killed him; he can never survive this. Go, go—for Heaven's sake, go!"

When he turned back, Aaron Grimstone was still sitting erect in the bed. The doctor approached him and attempted to take his hand and induce him to lie down.

"No, no, no! I can't breathe while that scoundrel is in the house! I haven't heard the hall-door yet. When I know that he is gone, then I will lie down, and not before!"

He waited, rigid, his eyes blazing, his fingers working convulsively in the clothes. Minutes passed, and there was no sound of closing doors. He turned to Eleanor, fiercely:

"Must I get up myself? must I go and throw that beast out? Oh, I can do it! I'm not dead yet."

"O papa! he's your son—he—"

"He's not my son!—Dr. Arkwright, will you call one of the servants? Stay—"

He reached out for the bell-cord. Nell got up and quit the room, and in an instant later the hall-door closed.

"Ah! he'll find I'm not dead, and I sha'n't die until his power for evil is ended."

Then he sank back on the pillows, and as his daughter re-entered the room he looked at her inquiringly. She was sobbing, and could not look at him. The servant entering in response to the bell, he asked:

"Who was it that just went out?"

"Master Herbert, sir. I can call him if you wish; he can't have reached the corner."

"No; that will do."

The doctor remained some time. When he had gone, the invalid sent Nell to the library for a portfolio. When she returned with it, he was up and dressed in a wrapper.

"Come," he said, "give me your arm."

He led her straight to Herbert's room. It was empty; but his belongings were in the room. Then he returned to his own chamber and rang the bell. When the servant answered, he said:

"Tell the housekeeper to pack up Mr. Herbert's clothes, books, and all his effects in this house, and send them to Wild Rose Villa, on the New Park road. Have it done this afternoon."

Wild Rose Villa had been furnished by Herbert as a bachelor's retreat the year before. It had been used as a sort of club-house to entertain his friends. His father had given him the place; and, while he knew of the presence of the actress, did not suspect the relations existing between her and his son.

Here Mélanie, waiting her husband's return to her, read in the newspapers, the next morning after the parting, the announcement of Mr. Grimstone's attack. She persuaded herself, the next day and the next, that Herbert remained away, that he was watching by the invalid's bedside. When the convalescence was announced, she said to herself, "He will be here to-day," and she arrayed herself in the fascinating fabrics he used to admire, to do honor to his coming. Late in the afternoon of the third day, her heart bounded with joy, for a van drove up and deposited many trunks and boxes laden with his property. She had them opened, and busied herself in distributing them about the pretty rooms, so that he should find everything familiar when he came. It was midnight before she had completed this labor of love; but she dressed herself as carefully as though going to a *soirée*, and sat down, fatigued and worn, to wait. He was accustomed to coming home in the morning hours. She must keep herself fresh and fascinating, and she applied all the dainty nostrums known to the stage to preserve herself for the rapture of the prodigal's coming. At five o'clock she despairingly disrobed and hid herself in bed; but even then there was no sleep for the poor tired head. Every sound in the distance startled her. It was he—then, as the wheels rolled on, she sank, gasping and woe-worn, on the hot, tear-wet pillows. At noon she could endure the agony no longer. She wrote a piteous line, and, closing it under cover to Nell, dispatched

the servant. In an hour a note came back with a line from her sister-in-law:

"DEAR MÉLANIE: We are in great distress. Papa has quarreled with Herbert, and he has gone to New York. Be brave; you have a true friend in

"Yours faithfully,

"ELEANOR."

"Gone to New York—and without a word!—gone!"

Then the strain on weary nature relaxed, and she was put in a delirium of fever, where for days a merciful unconsciousness gave the heart a surcease. When she recovered, she again wrote Nell, but could get no tidings of her husband.

Then she set out for New York. She sent for Abeille. Had he seen Herbert? Yes; Herbert was at the theatre every night, and was that very evening going to a stag-supper at Reynard's. He didn't know his address, but supposed he was at the Clarendon. Mélanie sent a note there, but Herbert hadn't been stopping at the hotel. In the evening she went to Reynard's. About eleven o'clock, Herbert, flushed and tipsy, came in with one of the women of Mélanie's old troupe. She confronted him, pale and resolute. He regarded her with an offensive leer.

"Herbert, don't you know me? It's Mélanie."

"Oh, damnation! go 'way! I don't want to see you. What are you plaguing me for?"

The woman with him laughed, shrugging her shoulders, and dragged him up the stairs. Raikes, Van Dyck, and the old set, were in the supper-room, and Herbert exploited the scene amid shouts of laughter.

"Let's have her up here; she can do the *cancan* for us—she beats your new flame at that, Bert."

When a company of the roystering blades ran down the stairs, Mélanie had disappeared, and the reprobates mourned the merriment lost in Beauxjambes's *cancan*.

CHAPTER XXVII.

SO RUNS THE WORLD AWAY.

THAT crowning stroke of Aaron Grimstone's illustrious life-work, as his money friends somewhat equivocally and prematurely called the late outbreak, suddenly assumed the shape of a menacing piece of justification to the rioters. The sagacious counsels of the arch-millionaire were no longer overruling the syndicates. Hilliard, from his assumed relations to the old man, and Dorr as his close confidant, controlled in a large measure the line of conduct pursued, and they brought passionate resentments and the arrogant sense of money's omnipotence to the consideration of ways and means that still needed the most delicate handling to obscure the handiwork of the corporation, and keep the malefactions of the labor unions in conspicuous relief. When appealed to, Grimstone listened in distraught listlessness. The only point upon which he pronounced with his ancient decision was the policy to be pursued with Carew. He ordered that no steps should be taken to incriminate him in the coming vengeance of law and order. This attitude caused vehement discussion: Carew, it was declared, was the most mischievous of all the agencies law and order had to deal with. His was the brain and his the battle-cry that welded the masses into a compact resistance, never before met by the forces of capital, and an example should be made of him.

Hilliard was not surprised at Grimstone's intervention in behalf of his quondam associate; but he was amazed when Killgore pronounced the same conviction, boldly declaring that he would himself defend the young editor if he were made a victim!

Nothing was to be undertaken seriously until after the spring elections, for which trusted friends of the corporations were selected in all the wards, and a mayor that could be depended on placed at the head of the ticket. The companies and citizens' associations meanwhile collected evidence to lay before the legislative committee and the jury. Every agency known to electoral warfare was brought into play by the Optimate committee, which for

the time adopted the non-partisan name of Citizens' Association. Made up only of the richest men in the city, selected by caucus, and chosen by prearranged agreement, this body lavished sums of money on the local contest which, in other years, the State Committee couldn't command. Every conceivable agency was brought into play. Women visited the houses of the doubtful voters, the pulpit was called in to point out to the various flocks the way to political salvation. Assurances were given the Romanist prelate and his priests that society expected their influence in rescuing property and business interests from the deadly peril of agrarian and communistic doctrines. A fund was established for indigent working-men, and all the workshops and manufactories of the city resumed work, to better control the votes of the men. Foremen in the interest of the employers were put on guard, and given funds to encourage the greedy. It was plainly given out that the continuance of work at full pay depended on the result of the election. If the Ultrocrats won, it would be by the numerical superiority of the working-men, and the corporations would have no other remedy than closing their establishments, not daring to trust their capital in a community ruled by such a party.

Fred and his fellows were not idle. Meetings were held daily and nightly. There was no money to use for the machinery of organization, let alone to tempt the venal. But the rallying-cry, 'Free trade, free labor, and free men," made up for the want of money. The working-men began dimly to realize, under the teachings of Fred, and an enthusiastic corps of collegians led by the Professor of Political Economy, that the protective practice was a rope fastened around the money-bags of the rich, the ends of which were used as a whip for labor; hence they presented a solidarity of conviction which the insidious plottings of the monopolists found it impossible to shake. By Fred's advice, the unions as bodies took no part in the contest, and, when the vote was counted, every Ultrocrat candidate on the ticket, save the councilmen in the rich wards, was elected! The city was panic-stricken! In spite of such agencies as even capital had rarely resorted to, the masses had realized their interests, and had stood for them man-

fully! "Business interests," the shameless and Plutocratic cry that had hitherto confused and misled the million, was now become the definition of greed, rapacity, corruption, and fraud. "Business interests" were caricatured by the triumphant masses on illuminated banners, by grotesque figures representing sacks of gold with the heads of the most notorious of the leaders of the syndicates, covered with coats of many colors, made up of stock certificates, that were well known to have been watered, and by means of which millions had been pillaged. Upon these were crisp definitions extracted from Fred's most vigorous leaders, such as, "Business interests"; "The union of the rich to plunder the poor"; "The letter of marque of the millionaire pirate to plunder commerce"; "Protection"; "The slavery of the South transferred to the North"; "The robbery of the many for the enrichment of the few"; "Thousands in the pockets of the capitalist, and hunger in the belly of the people"—these and scores as pointed and descriptive had met and vanquished the utmost power of money, and Valedo waited in painful suspense to see how the manumitted serfs would use their new mastery. Fred knew the peril, and met it. Only the wisest heads and most conservative counsels were encouraged, and to his surprise and delight the young men were the most contained and judicious in advising.

They had no wrongs to avenge. Their interest was purely patriotic, and wholesome results followed. For the riots, a jury was made up of which the college professor was foreman, and three of the corporations were represented. The remainder were decent tax-payers who had held aloof from the labor demonstration. The facts outlined in this narrative were discovered, and confirmed by participants and agents. The verdict was, of course, pronounced by the "Eagle," and the Optimate press in general, an insult to the "respectable" sentiment of the city. It was in substance to the effect that the "business interests," as the corporations were fond of calling themselves during election-times, were responsible for so manipulating employment as to drive the working-men to starvation and revolt; that the riot would never have resulted in bloodshed had the corporations not placed arms within reach of the desperate and misguided members of the unions, actuated by

motives that were degrading to humanity; that the property destroyed was for the most part worthless, and condemned as insecure—in proof, the reports of the company's architects were quoted; that the destruction of the "Albatross" was really in the public interest, as the builder had pronounced it even more unsafe than the late Academy, in which three hundred men had perished; that the evidence conclusively showed the responsibility of the railways and manufacturing syndicates in all the recent trouble; and that neither the city nor State could be made accountable for the destruction of property or lives lost; that the vicious economical doctrine of unjust taxation embodied in the tariff was at the root of all the existing evil, and, until that was swept away, labor must be the sport and victim of organized wealth. Then followed a great public meeting, in which this extraordinary verdict was ratified, and the State Congress delegation called upon to relieve labor of the tariff-chains put upon it by the corporations, under plea of protecting labor, which was every day reducing the artisan to the impotency of the Southern slaves before the war.

To the horror of the Optimate, the college professors, many of the local clergy, and a great following of those admitted to be "respectable," joined this demonstration, and signed the manifesto, calling upon Congress to legislate for the million instead of the millionaire. But, going still further in insolence, a resolution was added requesting Senator Killgore to resign his place in the Senate, as no longer representing the principles of the party that elected him: that when chosen to the Senate he was a poor man, in sympathy with those who earned their bread; that now he was a rich man, representing only the schemes of monopoly and the coterie of a centralizing oligarchy, under whose odious law-making the rich were becoming richer and the poor poorer.

This movement, with the findings of the jury, startled the State, and profoundly impressed the country. The Legislatures of several of the States took up the subject, and the congress elections in several of the States were fought upon the issues therein outlined; and, to anticipate a little, when the ballots were counted, an enormous majority for free trade was sent to the next Congress, and

the most illustrious and enlightened Ultrocrat in the Union was elected Speaker, and a sweeping free-trade bill brought into the House. It was defeated by the Optimate Senate, but the reformers did not lose heart, and the battle still went on until, two years later, the Ultrocrat candidate was elected to the presidency by a popular majority of a quarter of a million.*

Fred's mission was ended. He had proved that money might be confronted and checked; that the million were more than the few, and that the multitude might be made to see the heresies in which craft and gain enmeshed them. He declined the nomination for Congress which was urged upon him, pointing out that, in the line of battle forming, he could be of more service in journalism than in the legislative hierarchy. He named the college professor as a proper man to represent the awakening public conscience, and he was triumphantly elected.

Aaron Grimstone, with restored faculties, resumed his old *métier*. His strokes in stocks became the wonder of the street. It was calculated that in three months he had added millions to his fortune by the manipulation of railways and the watering of telegraph stock. He had been very busy with lawyers devising a will that should defeat contest after his death. He was very tender and confidential with Nell, but never alluded to Herbert. On Nell's pleading, he settled an income upon Mélanie, who had returned to the Villa, where her sister-in-law often spent part of every day, fondling the little boy that had come to comfort the deserted wife. Herbert had either forgotten or abandoned his action for divorce. Eleanor had never sent the letter he had intrusted to her, and the young man, lost in dissipation, and rid of his wife's presence, let the matter hang in suspense. He made large and frequent drafts upon his mother and sister, and gave no hint of returning to Valedo. There was no official proclamation of Herbert's ex-

* He was kept from his seat by the perjury of eight men put upon a commission selected to investigate the returns, who, so soon as agreed upon by the Ultrocrats, boldly turned upon their previous declarations, and pretended they were mere instruments for counting the votes certified by the Governors of the States, and not empowered to examine the methods by which the Governors awarded the certificates.

pulsion and disinheritance, but society in Valedo knew that father and son were alienated. The young man's comrades, who hated him cordially for his arrogance and pride of purse, were not slow in exposing the cause of the rupture, and Valedo waited and wondered what the *dénouement* would be.

In May, father and daughter were to sail for a prolonged tour in Europe. Everything had been arranged, all the complicated affairs of the great estate placed in order, and only the adieux were to be said.

Nell had tried her utmost to postpone the journey. She looked forward to it with dread. She was leaving all she loved behind, and she was not in the frame of mind to enter into the spirit of foreign travel. Her mother's health, too, was a strong uneasiness to her. Mrs. Grimstone was too delicate at any time to endure the sea-voyage, and, though she had made up her mind to go with her husband and daughter, the physician had peremptorily forbidden her to venture the ordeal. More than all, Eleanor had come to love Herbert's baby with a passionate idolatry that comes to women who have loved and lost. She had manœuvred cautiously to interest her father in the innocent child, but he turned from her harshly whenever the subject was mooted. She spent hours every day with the deserted wife, and had become sincerely attached to her. Mélanie, under trial, was the perfect antitype of the reckless actress in vogue. She bore her desertion with that pathetic resignation seen in women who have the instinct of maternal love developed beyond the mere surface passions of the social instinct.

She prattled wisely to Eleanor how she was going to rear the little Herbert, so that the curse of money should not corrupt him. Then, frightened at the inferable reproach to his father, she stammered, blushed, and shrank back. Eleanor laughed gayly.

"Ah, we must teach him to use wealth, not worship it, or become its victim. That's the secret of happiness with riches. He shall be guided by his aunty, who has learned the use and abuse of money"; and she sighed softly as she pressed the small image of her brother to her face, very much as if the pink and white atom were a muff of fleecy furbelows, meant expressly for the convenience of young women. She was deeply moved when she arose

to say farewell. Mélanie had looked forward to the separation with anguish, but she bore up better than Eleanor, now that the parting had come. She had felt her desertion less while she was a daily consoler and reminder of the absent husband. Nell, however, was to see Herbert in New York and urge him to return. This thought gave the poor wife sustaining hope, that the sister was far from sharing, though she did not let the other know it. From Mélanie's cottage she drove to Mrs. Carew's to take leave of that energetic propagandist of Hahnemann. It was nearly the dinner-hour, and Fred had just returned from the office for the day.

"Why haven't you been to see us, Mr. Fred? Papa has asked for you often, and would be very glad to see you," Eleanor said, a little embarrassed as she shook hands.

"Oh," exclaimed Mrs. Carew, "he has become such a politician that we never see him much at home, and, given up as he is to those pestilent Ultrocrats, he may well be ashamed to go near respectable people."

"Mother is right," Fred rejoined. "I am afraid to go near 'respectable' people; not, however, from the motive she alleges. I am already accused by the more hot-headed in my party of being in collusion with the 'bloated bondholders.' What would be said of me if I were known to hold intimate relations with the king of the corporations? Make my respectful duty to your father, and tell him that I sincerely hope he will come back from Europe restored to his old strength, and I'm sure he will appreciate the unselfishness of the wish, for he is the opponent we find hardest to meet in our battles."

Eleanor looked at him steadily while he said this laughingly. In her mind there was an image of another; and the contrast between the loyalty and unselfishness of this rash and headstrong enthusiast, with the other's shifty self-seeking and moral suppleness, stimulated vague, indefinable dreams that had long ago perplexed her, in the old, happy days, when she had first learned how constant he was in his convictions, and unspotted from the selfishness of the world.

Mrs. Carew pressed her to remain to dinner, and she put off her hat and cloak, and accepted with a sense of enjoyment and

surcease she had not felt in months. As the mother left the room to attend her hostess duties, Eleanor seized the opportunity to say to Fred:

"We shall be gone a year, perhaps longer. I am going to ask a favor of the friendship I know you have for me. I want you to promise me to be a friend to Mélanie. Poor thing! she needs protection and sympathy. I shall feel greatly relieved and comforted if you will promise me this."

She stopped with heightened color, and her voice was very tremulous.

"Willingly; I will do anything in my power. My mother shall visit her every day—something she will do the more willingly, that Mrs. Herbert is a confirmed homœopathist, and listens to the dear mother with unswerving credulity when she recites the wonders of that unobtrusive system."

"And I want you to promise that you will write and let me know how she is bearing up—how she gets along."

"I will do it with pleasure, and in return you must tell me of the sights in Europe, which, alas! I suppose I shall never see."

"Come," said Mrs. Carew, reappearing, "let us go out to dinner," and Fred, with Nell on his arm, followed the preoccupied matron. He was very gay during the meal, and Nell fell quite into the spirit of his jocularities. He drove home with her after an hour or two, in which Nell played and Fred sang. He took leave of her under the *porte-cochère*, and there were tears in her eyes and a strange trembling in her frame as he pressed her hands in a final farewell. Mrs. Grimstone came out as she went up-stairs, to tell her that the father had been very uneasy and troubled by her absence, and was waiting impatiently for her.

He started up and seized her with a feverish eagerness as she tripped softly into his study. The light was low and deeply shaded, and the father and child sat down together, as she had sat when a small girl, her head pillowed on his breast. The mother came in presently and joined the group, and they sat thus until the clocks were striking eleven. He did all the talking. His mind went back to Nell's childhood, and he revived little reminiscences of things of which she had never supposed that

he took note. He was very tender in bringing up the memories of his courtship and the early days of his married life. Mrs. Grimstone sobbed softly over the fond recollections, greatly surprised to discover them cherished in the heart she thought so hard and so immersed in worldliness. When the mother and daughter arose to go, he clung to them with a strange persistence, embracing them with an affection he had never before shown any one save Eleanor. After they were gone, he sat for an hour where he had been while they were with him. The stroke of midnight was ringing over the city, when he started up and began to pace the floor with a tottering, feeble stride. Turning up the lights, he unlocked a drawer and took out a package tied up with a faded blue ribbon. He sat down at the open desk and opened it with trembling fingers. There were a dozen letters, in a large, round, boyish hand, beginning "Dearest papa"; the ink was faded and yellow, the creases in the letters worn to rags. In the packet there was a small, oval, velvet case. He opened this, and looked intently at a round, chubby face, the daguerreotype colors still fresh and warm. It was Herbert's portrait, taken when he was a boy of twelve; his eyes large and innocent, his curls framing an expressive, almost Raphaelic countenance. He studied the charming, childish lines long and attentively, and sighed softly.

The packet was wrapped up again carefully, and put in an envelope, and with a firm hand addressed to Nell, then put back in the drawer. Then he arose and began pacing the floor preoccupiedly, his paralyzed arm hanging limply at his side, and the other in his bosom.

Nell, sleeping on another floor, started, shuddering in her dreams, at the dull echo of something crashing. She did not wake. In the morning the sensation of it returned to her, and she wondered at the vividness of her dreaming pain, and the half consciousness of the sound.

At seven o'clock, Ralph, the valet, entering his master's studio, was almost smothered by the fumes of escaping gas. The light was burning dimly, but the heavy curtains over the windows kept the room in obscurity. He threw open the window hastily

and ran to the chandelier; as he turned the key, he noticed at the other end of the apartment a pale-violet flame wavering behind the large Chinese screen. It was charcoal burning on a brazier, a pretty object of *bric-à-brac* that Nell had brought from Cordova during the family's first tour in Spain, frequently used by Mr. Grimstone to burn pastiles, when he suffered from neuralgia. As Ralph reached it, he started back trembling, horror-stricken, shrieking as he fled from the room. When, gathered at this blood-curdling clamor, the family entered the room, Nell was the first to reach her father. He was cold and dead, an expression of almost benignant serenity on the pinched, care-worn face. The stricken group fondled and caressed the cold figure. But the deadly gas had done its work.

Herbert's whereabout could not be found; but he saw the report of his father's death in the dispatches, and was in Valedo the next day. The funeral was very simple, though Valedo lavished sympathy upon the afflicted family. The newspapers refrained from any comment on the cause, the "Free Press" dealing tenderly and respectfully with the family in its affliction. Death softened many hates, and there were few that brought the dead man's name into the acrid discussions that were soon renewed when the fire-brand began his next campaign.

When the dead man's papers were opened, his vast fortune was found divided between his daughter and his own relatives. Herbert was expressly disinherited. "For value received," the controlling shares of stock in the "Eagle" were turned over to Alfred Carew. A bequest of one hundred thousand dollars was left to Elizabeth Kilgore. An income of five thousand dollars was settled upon Mélanie, to be paid out of Nell's portion. In spite of his sister's proffer to share her fortune with him, Herbert at once took steps to set the will aside, and it was done without difficulty — the reluctant testimony of the mother and sister, with that of Dr. Arkwright, proving the testator's mental infirmity when the new will was drawn up. Under the new order, the fortune was divided equally between the brother and sister, after the deduction of the widow's dower. Eleanor scrupulously carried out her father's wishes, while Her-

bert fought the conveyance of the "Eagle" shares to Fred but was worsted in the courts, his sister defending the suit in which Fred refused to enter. Herbert ruled in Aaron Grimstone's stead, and his reign was the embodiment of the spirit of those who learn nothing and forget nothing. He rebuilt the Academy in great splendor, as well as the ill-fated Albatross. Impotent to molest Fred, who now edited the "Eagle" consolidated with the "Free Press," he waited his opportunity to strike that "insolent upstart" a blow. He repelled all advances from Mélanie, though he took no steps for divorce. He inherited much of his father's business sagacity, and his fortune went on accumulating in spite of his yachting and excesses. He prepared to contest Killgore's seat in the Senate, and to this end allied himself to Madame Dominguez, whose husband had died. He built her a sumptuous villa on Alabama Avenue; and, though Valedo was scandalized by the *liaison*, a man with such a fortune could not be held to strict account. Hilliard was his intimate, and prospered in New York, where he was engaged to the daughter of a bonanza king.

And here the parable ends, as all parables end—incomplete, disappointing: unmerited rewards, and unrewarded merit; hapless love, and loveless happiness; Misery riveting the shackles Greed forges, and Ignorance holding the lees of the flacon to its own lips, while Greed and Irony gulp down the deep draughts of the life-giving nectar!—Money, not only the law, but the gospel of life; Money, the law-maker; Money, the priest at the altar of that worship whose creed is inequality, and whose ideal is self. It is at best a tediously-threshed sheaf, this tale of money-making; and, but for the romantic enchantments of the millionaire magician, we couldn't be expected to read it—could we? Why, after all, shouldn't he get who can, and he keep who has? Isn't the story old as Naboth's vineyard; old, indeed, as Tubal's crusade in search of equal partage? It was not only when God was wroth, that to punish Israel he gave the people a king!

THE END.

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